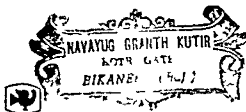
The Unfriendly Friends

India and America

T V Kunhi Krishnan



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India and America

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Preface

A SERIES OF transpositions of form and content seem to have happened to the political structures of the world How else could the United States of America the child of a revolution founded on human rights become the impressario of dictatorships and oligarchies and the principal criminal in the most negative of imperialist wars ? How else again could the Soviet Union at one time illiberal and closed throw its weight behind wars of liberation and self determination ? There are no simple answers No answers too to the paradox of countries acrimoniously divided by shared ideals as India and the United States have been

The book takes a close look at the paradox of the relationship between India and the United States their divergent perspectives and common aspirations which through perversion of circumstances have been in continuous discord There are superficial similarities b tween the political systems of the two countries but there has b en a psychological rejection of the United States by India and a corresponding inability in the United States to accept India as a country worthy of serious attention The book examines the differences in the economic and social perspectives of the two countries and the contradictions in their political beliefs It also discusses in parenthesis the basic impulses of India s foreign policy and its evolution the decline of nonalignment and the ritualistic allegiance to it the coming of age of Indian lead rship and the

attempts to modernise policy planning the obscuring of India in the world arena by China and the effect on India of the end of the bi-polar confrontation in the world

The major obstacles in establishing closer links between India and the United States were the divisions of the cold war the unconditional U S support to Pakistan India s closeness to the Soviet Union her faith in non-alignment and her opposition to military alliances sponsored by the United States Even after the doctrinal rigidities of the cold war have dissolved and nonalignment has become respectable in the United States the two countries have not come closer What has kept them apart is the fundamental psychological cleavage between them which came into bold relief in 1971 when Nixon gave unconditional support to Pakistan Since 1971 marks a watershed in the relationship between the two countries the crisis in the sub continent in that year and its impact on India s ties with the United States are carefully traced in the book

The first chapter is in the nature of an exploration of an evolving phenomenon and in consequence has had to be tentative about numerous contradictions This chapter concerns itself more with America s attitude towards India while the succeeding chapter studies India s response to it The third and the fourth chapters largely narrative in pattern examine the course of the political crisis and the war in the sub-continent in 1971 The fifth and sixth chapters recapture the main trend in the relationship between the two countries over the past three decades The seventh deals with the U S role in Asia and the eighth with the differences between India and the United States over the Vietnam war The ninth chapter examines the significance of aid and India s adjustment to its realities The last chapter sums up the contradictions between the two countries and discusses the nature of the relationship that might emerge in the future

After the last chapter of the book was printed a series of events closely connected with the subject matter of the

book occurred Richard Nixon resigned from the office of the President of the United States and Gerald Ford an American virtually unknown outside the United States till about a year ago became the President There would be many changes in the manner of functioning of the White House but qualitatively no change is expected in the U S attitude towards India and the premise on which the book is based requires hardly any change Just as Nixon did not refer to India in his last speech as President Ford in his inaugural speech made no reference to India Both the men were however deeply concerned about U S relations with China

I am presenting no thesis nor am I necessarily reflecting the Indian Government s viewpoint I have to concede however that though I have tried to maintain objectivity I am telling the story as seen from New Delhi It is difficult to write about events which have been of serious concern to one s own country without betraying some point of view I have not for the most part energetically sought to be objective but have not been blind to the opinions of those who look at the problems discussed in the book from a different angle I have had the benefit of discussions with some of the policy planners in New Delhi Swaran Singh the minister for external affairs has discussed with me the major impulses of India s foreign policy in the 1970s and their effect on the relations between India and the United States D P Dhar who was the chairman of the policy planning committee of the external affairs ministry in 1971 and later became the chairman of the planning commission has read parts of the manuscript and made useful comments I have talked with Dinesh Singh a former minister for external affairs about some aspects of India s foreign policy V K Krishna Menon one of the main architects of India s foreign policy in the 1950s gave me his assessment of the relationship between the two countries K P Unnikrishnan member of Parliament and former convener of the Congress Parliamentary Party s standing committee for external affairs has helped me a great deal in the preparation of the book

and I like to express my thanks to him

O V Vijayan the political cartoonist has read three chapters of the manuscript and made many useful comments V N Rajan a former member of the Indian Civil Service has read the manuscript and suggested improvements Others who have read parts of the manuscript are N S Jagannathan and C P Ramachandran of the *Hindustan Times* I wish to thank Miss K A Seethalakshmi for helping mewith the preparation of the index I have received help from these and many others but the responsibility for the opinions expressed in the book and for any errors that may have crept in is entirely my own I have not been able to identify the sources of all the information given in the book because some of them like to remain anonymous

New Delhi T V KUNHI KRISHNAN
August 20 1974

THE HARD-COVER edition of the book was released during an era of great expectations in the relations between India and the United States In the past year and a half many changes have taken place In spite of the setting up of a joint Indo U S commission with U S secretary of state Kissinger and India s foreign minister Chavan as co chairmen the two countries seem to have moved further apart I have tried in this paperback edition to trace some of the developments of the past years and have had to revise my earlier judgement on certain issues I have had the privilege of discussing the events of the past year with foreign minister Chavan

I have deleted the chapter on Vietnam but have referred to the subject in the earlier chapter The index for the paperback edition has been diligently prepared by Miss Indira Rajan

New Delhi T V KUNHI KRISHNAN
March 1 1976

1

KISSINGER AND INDIA

THE young lady sitting opposite this writer at the dinner table in Dr Henry Kissinger s residence at Cambridge Massachusetts said Krishna Menon is attractive He has a striking face Don t you think so ? It was Dr Kissinger who replied He smiled and said Attractive ? Yes the cobra is also attractive He was referring to the *Time* magazine cover which had pictured V K Krishna Menon India s defence minister alongside a hooded cobra a few weeks earlier The conversation at the table soon turned to India and her foreign policy

The group at the dinner table was the spill over of an international seminar conducted by Kissinger at Harvard. It included among others a British M P a member of the west German Bundestag a Polish musician a civil servant from Ghana and a Swedish author Kissinger with an amused and inquiring smile was cautious in his views on India except for his feigned admiration for the cobra Al though in the summer of 1962 a few months after the capture of Goa India was not a hot favourite in the United States he gave the impression that in principle he

appreciated India s stand on world affairs He had visited India a few months earlier and said in New Delhi that if Pakistan were to be stupid enough to enter into an alliance with China she would not survive for long [1] He had asked how Asia would survive without a strong independent India During the same visit he had said in Calcutta that it would be inconsistent on the part of Pakistan to have a military alliance with China as well as the United States though Pakistan had recognised China At the dinner table consistent with his earlier views he expressed the hope that India would acquire a strong and powerful voice in world affairs

The annual international summer seminar programme organised by him at Harvard where he worked as professor of government till he moved to Washington brought together intellectuals from many parts of the world including east Europe He had the image of a liberal intellectual and earned well deserved reputation as a creative thinker on European affairs and U S national security He was a critic of U S policies in Asia and Europe the United States he wrote in 1968 professing idealistic philosophy often fails to gain acceptance of democratic values because of its heavy reliance on economic factors [2] He thought that all over the world peoples would find less and less in America with which to identify themselves He said They may admire our achievements but we have not succeeded in making either our values or our accomplishments seem applicable to their tasks [3] He opposed Washington s policy based on the system of military alliances and on the proposition that deterrence of aggression required the largest possible grouping of powers He was sceptical of the effectiveness of the military alliances sponsored by the United States in Asia He said that Pakistan s motive for

1 *The Hindu* January 7 1962
2 Henry A Kissinger *American Foreign Policy* W W Norton & Co Inc New York 1969 p 84
3 Kissinger *The Necessity for Choice* Harper & Row New York 1960 p 3

obtaining U S arms was not security against a communist attack but protection against India [4] He thought India had the benefit of a well trained civil service and of an experienced leadership group and that of the new nations India perhaps was in the best position to resolve its choices wisely and purposefully [5]

After he became the chief of the national security council under President Nixon he found as other U S policy planners had found earlier that Pakistan could be used in furthering U S objectives in Asia His secret statement supporting Pakistan and denouncing India made in December 1971 after Pakistan had bombed Indian air fields came as somewhat of a surprise to many who had known him earlier A new element he brought in was secrecy In an era dominated by multi dimensional mass communication systems a fair amount of secrecy in diplomacy is necessary and the Wilsonian dictum of open diplomacy has little relevance But Kissinger has made a virtue of secrecy [6]

When he asked U S Government agencies to take a hard line with New Delhi he was not prepared to own it Instead he tried to give it a facade of reasonableness After he had asked the State Department officials on December 5 1971 to take an anti India stand on December 7 he told an informal Press conference about the close friendship between India and the United States and added that Washington had differed with New Delhi with great sad

4 Kissinger *The Necessity for Choice* Harper & Row New York 1960 p 66

5 *Ibid* p 305

6 He has always loved secrecy Even in 1962 when he was not officially working for the Government on his secretary s desk outside his office in Cambridge Mass was a sign which read Don t ask me what I am doing I do not know what I am doing His secret mission to Peking in July 1971 and his unpublicised talks with North Vietnamese leaders in Paris were in tune with his philosophy of life

ness and disappointment

The disclo ure[7] of the secret U S decisions on the crisis in east Bengal did not however support his public state ments but sh ɔwed that he had actively supported Pakistan and worked ag unst India When the cover under which he operated w s blown off what India saw were an angry President and an embarrassed adviser James Reston of the *New York Times* lamented that the United States had a government now of men not really of laws and accepted procedures and that Kissinger was an instrument of the President [8] But Kissinger was certainly more a parti cipant than an instrument From February 1972 onwards to the day when Nixon resigned he had not only been Nixon s adviser but also the principal partner who formula ed policies and as Sir Al c Douglas Home the former British foreign secretary said a creative statesman

Kissinger s remarks about India as indeed about other nations have to be studied with caution because often times he expresses opinions he does not hold on to for long Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin who is by no means unfriendly to the U S secretary of state said candidly of Kissinger in February 1976 in Washington It isn t possible to believe a word that man is saying It isn t possible to go by the spoken word alone Even in

7 Leaks of official secrets are not a new phenomenon in the United States Describing the Washington scene two decades ago Dean Acheson a former secretary of state wrote in his memoirs *Present at the Creation* about his experience as an under secretary The ordinary processes of Washington s life had played their familiar role Leak had been followed by counter leak gossip by counter gossip Distinguished statesmen had made their contributions Rumour had been transmut ed into report of fact In other word the American democracy was operating normally with the result that the minds of both our own people and foreigners had become confused

8 April 27 1972

October 1974 when he came to New Delhi to have discussions with Indian leaders and set up an Indo U S commission Kissinger said he recognised India s special role of leadership in South Asian and world affairs because of her size and position He also said he took seriously India s affirmation that it has no intention to develop nuclear weapons He hoped India would not export nuclear technology Fourteen months later in February 1976 he accused India of misusing nuclear technology and said India was using peaceful nuclear technology acquired abroad to develop nuclear explosives

In October 1974 after setting up the Indo-U S commission he said that in the economic field India was only the twenty sixth largest trading partner of the United States a totally unnatural condition which this commission hopefully gives an opportunity to rectify In spite of his fervent wish to improve economic ties a year later trade relations between the two countries deteriorated In 1972 73 India had a favourable balance of trade with the United States to the extent of Rs 51 16 crores In 1974-75 there was an adverse balance of trade of Rs 353 crores Between 1973 and 1975 Indian exports to the United States increased only by 36 per cent while imports from the United States into India increased by 270 per cent There is a certain indifference in the attitude of the U S government even in regard to commercial relations

An example of this attitude was provided when the U S embassy in India boycotted the first meeting of the Indo U S business council which met in New Delhi in the first week of February 1976 The three-day dialogue between leading industrialists of the two countries produced no worthwhile results U S ambassador William Saxbe refused to attend any of the functions connected with the council meeting. He brainwashed the U S business group before the council met and sabotaged the council by telling the U S businessmen that they were in a hostile country and that Washington doubted if any useful results could be expected to come out of the meetings of the council In view of the attitude adopted by the U S authorities

Indian foreign minister Y B Chavan cancelled a scheduled appearance before the council

Washington was presumably upset about the references Indira Gandhi had made to the acts of destabilisation and interference in the internal affairs of other countries by external forces She said in Chandigarh in December 1975 that after what had admittedly been done in Chile it is not for me to give proof of who is doing what against us It is for them to say what they are doing The U S leaders were piqued at the Prime Minister s remarks The ties between the two countries again moved into an unhappy phase The improvement registered in 1973 and 1974 after the Bangladesh crisis had blown over was in danger of being dissolved in the bitterness generated by the events in 1975

There has been an ever present undercurrent of tension between the governments of the two countries The events of 1971 dramatised such a moment of tension A close examination of these events would show the dimensions of the differences between India and the United States During the crisis in 1971 Richard Nixon was the strategist and Kissinger his tactician Kissinger seemed to have convinced himself that for a short term objective Nixon s pro Pakistani stand was correct and he became a willing instrument (if an instrument he was) of Nixon in his effort to thwart India s moves on Bangladesh It is of no serious consequence where the secret U S moves against New Delhi originated although it is important that the origin be identified It was not the Pentagon nor the State Department nor Congress which gave the lead in favouring Pakistan It was the White House—more specifically the President s office—which shaped the policy On December 4 1971 a day after Pakistan attacked India Nixon himself authorised a statement which said India bears the major responsibility for the hostilities that have ensued

After India declared unilateral ceasefire Nixon claimed that it was his pressure on the Soviet Union which in turn put pressure on India that had brought about the ceasefire He said that the United States in communica

tion with the Soviet Union played a constructive role in ending the war[9] New Delhi considered this as one of the most perverse statements that came out of the White House on the crisis in December 1971 Indira Gandhi stated that when the battle in Bangladesh ended it was we who decided unilaterally on a ceasefire but the White House kept repeating the claim that Nixon had saved Pakistan from being overrun by India

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto the Pakistan President also believed that Pakistan was saved by Nixon He told C L Sulzberger the *New York Times* columnist on foreign affairs that the enemy s onslaught against west Pakistan would have continued unabated if the United States had not given a firm ultimatum The Soviet Union said Bhutto understood the signal and then pressed India to accept a ceasefire I know that this is true I have just been in Peking and Chou En lai confirmed this to me Besides Chou En lai Bhutto and Nixon some leaders in India also believed that the United States and the Soviet Union had a hand in the ceasefire Atal Behari Vajpayee the president of the Jana Sangh party suspected that India declared the ceasefire as a result of pressure from Moscow

But the Indian Government has all along maintained that the ceasefire decision was entirely its own On December 16 1971 soon after Indira Gandhi the Prime Minister announced in Parliament amid scenes of great jubilation the surrender of the Pakistani troops in Dacca she instructed N K Seshan her private secretary to call an urgent meeting of the Political Affairs Committee (PAC)[10]

9 Interview with *Time* magazine January 3 1972

10 The PAC the highest policy making body of the Government consisted of Indira Gandhi Y B Chavan the finance minister Swaran Singh the foreign minister Jagjivan Ram the defence minister and Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed the food minister In March 1974 the PAC was renamed CCPA (Cabinet Committee for Political Affairs) with no change in its composition

of the Indian cabinet as well as the full cabinet At about 6 P M when the PAC met to discuss the war situation Indira Gandhi s proposal for a ceasefire was accepted by her senior colleagues after a short discussion When the full cabinet met soon after it is believed some members wondered if *India should not wait for Pakistan President* Yahya Khan s broadcast scheduled for that evening Indira Gandhi brushed them aside and asked those who wanted to listen to him to do so The cabinet soon put its seal of approval on the Prime Minister s proposal for a ceasefire She herself made the decision about the timing of the ceasefire and nobody not even her own advisers could take the credit for it

The PAC had decided that the first announcement of the decision should be broadcast over the All India Radio (AIR) before Yahya Khan s scheduled broadcast at 7 45 P M Sharada Prasad the director of information in the Prime Minister s secretariat asked the news room in the AIR to stand by for an important message The news room kept a telephone line open for the message and alerted all radio stations throughout India Meanwhile the PAC decided to consult opposition leaders It took more time than was anticipated to contact them and bring them over some of them in government cars for a discussion with the Prime Minister By the time the discussions ended Yahya Khan s broadcast declaring that he would continue the war was over The Prime Minister s secretariat telephoned the AIR and gave the news of the cabinet decision to declare a unilateral ceasefire The AIR cut into its regular programme and announced the news of the ceasefire a little after 8 20 P M Immediately after the AIR was informed of the decision Indira Gandhi herself spoke to V V Kuznetzov the Soviet first deputy foreign minister who was in New Delhi and gave him the news 1I

1 With his three years of experience as a worker in a steel mill in the United States in the 1910s *Kuznetzov* speaks good English better English than Andrei Gromyko the Soviet foreign minister

Kuznetzov had no direct hand in the decision to declare the ceasefire Indira Gandhi s advisers were however in constant touch with Soviet authorities throughout the period of the war Kuznetzov accompanied by four im portant Soviet officials including the chief of the KGB had arrived in India on December 12 The Prime Minister had met him the same day for nearly ninety minutes and discussed with him m asures that would promote peace and stability in the region and not escalate the war She had also talks with the Soviet leader on Moscow s reaction to the U N resolution on Bangladesh He informed her that h• believed the United States and China would not intervene in east Bengal but they might be forced to act if India intended to occupy any part of west Pakistan or Pakistan held Kashmir The Soviet officials later told P N Haksar the principal secretary to the Prime Minister that Moscow hoped that India s objective was only to liberate east Bengal and not overrun west Pakistan

The White House had used the hot line three times and requested the Soviet leaders to urge India not to press the attack on Pakistan in the western sector In a bid to put pressure on India Washington requested Moscow to inform New Delhi that it was under obligatio 1 to assist Islamabad to counter external aggression The Soviet Union is believ ed to have informed India of Washington s concern But New Delhi gave no specific assurance except the general statement that India had no military ambitions in the west It was at this stage when Washington s efforts in the United Nations and its own secret diplomatic moves failed to stem Indian advance in west Pakistan that Nixon even without informing Kenneth Keating the U S ambassador *in India sent the Enterprise the nuclear powered* aircraft carrier to the Bay of Bengal in an effort to intimidate New Delhi Nixon s reference to the role he played in bringing about the ceasefire related to his secret request to Moscow over the hot line but his claim that the United States could take credit for bringing about the ceasefire appeared fanciful

The U S moves against India in 1971 revealed to the

world more dramatically than ever before the gulf that separated official Washington from New Delhi During this period for the first time India opposed stoutly and what was more openly U S attempts to intimidate her The United States overlooked the genocide committed by west Pakistan in east Bengal on the plea that it was an internal affair of Pakistan It turned a deaf ear to India s complaint that the massive influx of refugees into India from east Bengal was a grave threat to her economy and political stability India was worried not so much by the threat of war by Pakistan as by the upheaval inside east Pakistan and its repercussions in India Kissinger himself had said a few years earlier that some States feel threatened not only by the foreign policy of other countries but also and perhaps especially by domestic transformations in other countries [12] When the war broke out even against the advice of the CIA the White House insisted that it had convincing evidence that India wanted to seize Pakistan held territory in Kashmir and justified its moves against India on this ground It refused to divulge the nature of the evidence When Kissinger was asked if he wanted the public to take on faith alone a major justification for U S policy he replied That is correct We will not produce the evidence since it would compromise other things [13]

The other things that Kissinger referred to have never been revealed and are difficult to guess but perhaps an insight into the minds of the men behind the policies might throw some light on them Nixon and Kissinger the two architects of U S policy towards India seemed to share some common objectives although their manner of articulation differed Henry Brandon a well known British political analyst writes that they had more in common than a love of secrecy and that both were lonely men tragic figures who had achieved far more than they ever hoped to and yet lack the contentment and happiness it

12. Kissinger *American Foreign Policy* p 55
13 *The New York Times* February 10 1972.

ought to bring [14] This was perhaps true of Nixon but it was an unfair assessment of Kissinger an assessment that had already become dated It is apparent that Kissinger has derived fulfilment translating his ideas into policies In fact there is nothing tragic about him After he became the secretary of state in September 1973 he not only gave philosophical content but also practical shape to U S foreign policy and helped Nixon despite the blemishes of the numerous scandals at home to become a colourful and controversial President The two men were different believed in different ideals but complemented each other

In 1957 Kissinger said in his prize winning book *Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy* that what the United States needed was a twentieth century equivalent of showing the flag ability and readiness to make our power felt quickly and decisively not only to deter Soviet aggression but also to impress the uncommitted with our capacity for decisive action [15] He preferred to gain U S objectives with a warning rather than with war A decade ago he wanted the United States to base its foreign policy on limited wars and on the pursuit of international stability The concept of limited wars as explained by him in 1957 included the use of nuclear weapons up to 500 kilotons—more than twenty times the power of the Hiroshima bomb After the Soviet Union s ascendancy as a superpower he recognised that there could be no victor in an all out nuclear war He advocated a combination of diplomacy and force lowering his nuclear ceiling to the use of tactical nuclear weapons He also said that our goal should be to build moral consensus among non communist nations

After he moved into the White House as adviser he

14 Quoted by E C Hogdkin in the *Times* London August 24 1973 from Henry Brandon s *The Retreat of American Power* Bodley Head 1973

15 Kissinger *Nuclear Weapons and Foreign Policy* Harper and Row New York 1957 p 264

developed the concept that the main challenge the United States faced was to evoke the creativity of a pluralistic world to base order on political multi polarity even though he recognised that the overwhelming military strength in the world would be bi polar and would remain with the superpowers It is in pursuance of this objective that the United States has cultivated China and encouraged her to emerge as a mini superpower In the task of creating a multi polar system the United States has not found much use for new nations like India who according to Kissinger feel little sense of responsibility to an over all international equilibrium [16] and are much more conscious of their local grievances Kissinger believes that the people as a whole should have little concern with the formulation of foreign policy for in his opinion the democracies which have been most successful have been those based on essentially aristocratic forms [17] While Kissinger s intellectual sincerity and cold blooded commitment could be understood Nixon s rhetoric and moral justification for the policies he had pursued were difficult to comprehend

Since Nixon took special interest in what went on in Asia India s initiative which challenged his policies in south Asia in 1971 irritated him The White House seemed to have the notion that India s success in assisting east Bengal to establish Bangladesh would amount to a snub for the President and would be a challenge to the global responsibility the United States had imposed upon itself to shape the political events of the world Nixon s tilt towards Paki tan was attributed by some U S observers to personal pique Nixon had perhaps reason to be resentful of India s lack of fervour for him In 1953 when he visited India as vice president he was met on arrival in Madras where he landed

16 Kissinger *American Foreign Policy* W W Norton & Co Inc 1969 p 80

17 Kissinger *The Necessity for Choice* Harper & Row New York p 322

en route to New Delhi by a deputy secretary of the State Government, one of the lowest ranking men in the official hierarchy The protocol conscious vice president was believed to have been hurt In 1964 when he came to India on a visit sponsored by Pepsi cola after he was defeated in the election for the office of the governor of California he was largely ignored by New Delhi The highest dignitary he met was Morarji Desai the finance minister who gave him a vegetarian luncheon which Nixon thought was a bland affair both in terms of conversation and food

From India Nixon went to Pakistan where he received a warm welcome from Prseident Ayub Khan He was lionised and feasted with lavish hospitality—and Pakistanis are a hospitable people He was impressed by the Pakistani leaders including Yahya Khan whom he met for the first time After this visit he told President Johnson that Ayub Khan was a trustworthy and dependable leader and should be supported At the end of every visit he made to the sub continent[18] he advocated closer cooperation between the United States and Pakistan The ties between the two countries had been close but when Nixon became President in 1968 the United States moved a little closer to Pakistan! Personal pique alone could not have been the reason behind Nixon s support to Pakistan for this would be a poor reflection on the people who voted him to power Nixon s prejudices played but a minor role

A major justification for the policy was the necessity not to upset his efforts to befriend China He found that Pakistan was not only less complex and more easy to work with than India but also useful in his search for a detente with China just as earlier Presidents had found Pakistan more useful than India in the cold war against the Soviet Union and China Pakistan had expressed the desire to be a broker between Washington and Peking even as early as 1964 Bhutto had said on Augu t 21 1964 that nothing would give Pakistan greater satisfaction than to see a

18 He has so far visited Pakistan six times and India four

rapprochement between China and the United States and that we will be willing to undertake whatever limited role we can play in this matter When Nixon visited Europe and Asia in 1969 he discussed his plans for a Sino American detente with President Yahya Khan and Rumanian President Nicolae Ceausescu On the sam trip when Nixon was in New Delhi he is believed to have told Indira Gandhi of his desire to make up with China He had also probed the possibility of India helping America pull out of Vietnam India s ruling Congress party was splitting in 1969 and the Indian Government was far too preoccupied with internal problems to concern itself with America s problems Both Yahya Khan and Ceausescu met Nixon in Washington in October 1970 and continued the discussions A month later Yahya Khan went to Peking with a personal message from Nixon to Mao Tse tung [19] The Chinese response to the U S moves came through Rumania Deputy premier Gheorghe Radulescu of Rumania met Chou En lai in Peking in November 1970 and brought back a message for Nixon

One of the immediate reasons for Nixon s coldness towards India in 1971 was his desire to have the support of Pakistan in establishing contact with China As he himself admitted the Presidents of Pakistan and Rumania had helped him during the period of cautious exploration and gathering of confidence '[20] between Washington and Peking India was of no use to him in his efforts to disengage from Vietnam She appeared to him to be perched on a moral eminence which clouded her vision and made her ineffective Pakistan was different

After the short term objective of entering into a dialogue with the Chinese leaders was achieved Nixon was able to relax His interest in a dialogue with India seemed to justify the claim of some Washington observers that his tilt was not towards Pakistan but towards Peking After his visit to Peking he wrote friendly letters to Indira Gandhi to which she sent appropriate replies In

19 *The Dawn* July 29 1971

20 *Report to Congress* Presid nt Nixon February 1972

November 1972 Nixon authorised U S participation in the World Bank proposal for debt rescheduling to India The U S acceptance of the proposal which it had stalled earlier seemed to signify that Washington was not totally hostile towards India The dialogue was also a recognition of the fact that the United States wanted India at least to the extent India wanted the United States John Ervin a U S under secretary of state told a national foreign policy conference for senior business executives in September 1972 that India already seemed to play a decisive role in south Asia and that a policy that was not responsive to the needs of India and other countries of the third world would very soon endanger our substantial investments and hinder our access to increasingly vital energy and raw material resources

India and the United States agreed that they would co-operate on economic matters and leave political differences aside for a while In fact the dialogue has so far been limited to economic relationship It has however proved more difficult where it attempted howsoever tentatively a reconciliation of world power compulsions The disagreement for instance over the U S role in Asia and in the Indian Ocean has been acute Nixon was convinced that the United States could not abandon its world role as he felt there was no other nation that had the strength to assume it He believed that without U S assistance the world will become much more unstable 21 Kissinger was also troubled by the same vision of a world without U S leadership He said in a speech a few days before his nomination as secretary of state that the world would be a poor place without U S leadership As someone who came to this country as a refugee from totalitarianism I have a special feeling for what America can still mean to the world and how a withdrawal of America from the world would deprive mankind of hope

21 In a speech at the Chicago Republican party dinner November 19 1971

to contend with a hostile America the United States did not want to have a peeved India Both the countries were eager to bury past antagonisms and normalise relations even if they could not get close to each other Nixon admitted in May 1973 that India had emerged from the 1971 crisis with new confidence power and responsibility[24] and said that the United States respected India as a major country But he wanted India to remain non-aligned and warned her not to get locked into exclusive ties He accused India of using the United States as a scapegoat in domestic affairs After patting India on the back and asking her to forget the past antagonism Nixon declared that the United States has always had a close and warm relationship with Pakistan He praised President Bhutto for th many courageous steps of political economic and social reform he had taken and reiterated the US determination to see that the security and independence of Pakistan were assured He told the smaller nations of the region that they were not part of any country s (presumably meaning India s) sphere of influence and assured *them of his support Nixon s message to Congress in May* 1973 showed his continued tilt towards Pakistan It also indicated that if India behaved well he would be willing to normalise relations

His secretary of state thought that normalising relations with India did not clash with his global policy of detente and was even useful in moving closer to the Soviet Union Kissinger encouraged Daniel P Moynihan who was appointed US ambassador to India after the post had remained vacant from June 1972 to March 1973 to create a new climate of friendship between the two countries In 1973 and 1974 there was a concerted move to bring India and America closer An inspired report said that Moynihan had made a deep impression on Indira Gandhi and foreign minister Swaran Singh by his liberal outlook on life But a senior cabinet colleague of Indira Gandhi told this writer that he thought Moynihan had a streak of

24 *Report to Congress* President Nixon May 1973

immaturity in him and had nothing of the sparkle of Galbraith or Bowles

Moynihan tried to be pleasant With Kissinger s enthusiastic support he was able to achieve good results at the beginning of his term of office Believing as he did in dramatic gestures Kissinger wanted the United States to make a flamboyant move It was on his advice that Nixon approved of the idea of taking a fresh look at PL-480 funds held by the United States in India The negotiations on the future of the funds had been stalled earlier for two years Moynihan made fresh proposals The bureaucracy in Washington was opposed to the Moynihan formula for l quidating the PL-480 funds It was only because Kissinger took a strong line that the State Department under Rogers and the Treasury Depa tment fell in line with Moynihan and the agreement was finally signed in February 1974

Although this agreement indicated the willingness of the two countries to establish normal relations it did not represent any breakthrough in creating a new climate of understanding Washington and New Delhi had their basic differences India feared that external forces were encour aging reactionary elements in India There were frequent reports in the United States of CIA involvement in foreign lands *Pracneti Patai* Bangkok s influential journal quoting U S State Department s biographical register and materials said to have been gathered from the Thai Protection Group an organisation based in Washington gave disturbing details of CIA agents working in Asian countries. The paper said there were 120 CIA agents in India 106 in Thailand 42 in Burma 33 in Malaysia 23 in Cambodia and 75 in Indonesia The reports about the CIA appearing in the United States and outside could not be dismissed as fiction There was genuine sus picion in the minds of the Indian leaders about the activi ties of the CIA agents in India and it was conveyed in no uncertain terms to Washington

The U S decision to develop a naval base in the Indian Ocean was another source of extreme irritation to

India Moynihan s statement made in Madras in March 1974 about Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean where the United States was strengthening naval installations showed how unimportant India was in U.S calculations He said that U S interests in the base were more impor*tant than those of India who had nothing of fundamental* concern there He quipped Why call it Indian Ocean ? One may well call it Madagascar Sea New Delhi believed that the U S interest in Diego Garcia 7000 km away from the United States was an aggressive interest and was opposed to India s fundamental concern for her security The U S action in Diego Garcia was also against the wish of the United Nations which had clearly expressed itself in favour of making the Indian Ocean a zone of peace India s reaction to Moynihan s statement was caustic The foreign minister said Who is he (the ambassador) to change the name (of the Indian Ocean) based on geographical situation ? It is no gift of the U S government or the ambassador He described Moynihan s statement as untenable and unacceptable

Although both countries were sniping at each other there was frequent discussion at various levels to reach an understanding on major issues In the United States the decision to improve the ties was taken at the highest level and Kissinger played a key role He used every opportunity to let India know that he was not against her He perhaps felt uneasy to live with the tilt towards President Bhutto of Pakistan and expressed in no uncertain terms his desire to normalise relations with India

He is reported to have told an Indian leader in 1973 that the United States would be stupid if it alienated India for the sake of Pakistan s friendship This is what he had said ten years ago also during his visit to New Delhi in 1962 In April 1974 Kissinger declared that U S relations with India had taken a decided turn for the better in the course of the past year We remember the difficult days of 1971 when some of us *were tilting in one* direction—as some of our journalist friends never let us forget But it was inevitable that two democracies like

India and America should reach a period when, with so many common values they would jointly find a way of realising their common aspirations and work for the peace and welfare of mankind Although such expressions of goodwill as these even when they are sincere do not ulti mately determine the course of the relations between two countries they show a willingness to improve relations

India reciprocated the sentiments Indian am bassador Kaul said in October 1973 that the U S Government appreciated the realities of the situation in the Indian sub-continent and were taking steps to untilt the tilt In December 1973 when this writer asked Swaran Singh to explain why he thought that the relations between India and the United States had become mature he said after the setback in the relation ship between the two countries in 1971 the United States had changed its attitude as was evident from the support Washington gave for the admi sion of Bangladesh in the United Nations He said The United States might have had some hard feelings against us on our attitude towards Veitnam but today they have come down to the view point that we held

In July 1974 Kissinger made a categorical statement. He said that the misunderstanding with India was over The seal of approval for the efforts to bring the two countries together was given by President Ford when he wrote to Indira Gandhi in August 1974 about the impor tance he attached to good relations Prime Minister Indira Gandhi invited Ford to visit India In October 1974 both the countries made a heroic effort to be agreeable to each other when Kissinger came to India to convince Indian leaders that he was sincere in his desire to improve rela tions He said in New Delhi that President Ford had asked him to affirm that the United States strongly supported a peaceful settlement on the Indian sub-continent free from imposition or pressure or outside interference He also said that U S India relationship was mature and one which leaves behind the peaks and valleys of the past

A joint Indo-U S commission was set up with the purpose

of building an institutional framework for wide ranging co operation in three specific areas (1) economic and commercial (2) scientific and technological and (3) educational and cultural affairs India s foreign minister Y B Chavan said that the establishment of the commissson was in tune with the larg r pattern of emerging interdependence of the world in which no country could be entirely self-suffi ient and wh re there was no real alternative to peaceful international co-operation

The setting up of the commission however did not mean any change in India s foreign policy as was explained by Indira Gandhi in an interview to a Bangladesh correspondent She said India s was not an opportunistic foreign policy but one based on certain principles which remained unchanged She also said basically the Americans had to appreciate not only India s problems but the need for us to take our decisions independently and to make our judgements independently When she was asked about the CIA s attempt to interfere in India s affairs she said we should neither underestimate nor exaggerate the role of the CIA in this country She added It is the American newspapers and books and other publications *which give us a great deal of information about* what CIA is doing in different parts of the world

Indira Gandhi s fears about the CIA activities in India were shared by no less a person than ambassador Moynihan When it was known that Kissinger had personally devised and directed the strategy to bring down Chilean President Dr Salvador Allende s Government through economic stagnation there was considerable resentment *and suspicion Kissinger had earlier stoutly denied* any *U S* attempt to bring down Allende s Government Even before the sordid facts of U S involvement in Chile were known to the public Indira Gandhi had publicly implied that the United States was responsible for Allende s murder and had warned Indians of a similar danger of collusion between certain elements in India and outside forces which wished to topple her Government Ambassador Moynihan *had dismissed her remarks* as inaccurate and unfair but

when the CIA role in the murder of Allende was made public in the United States Moynihan said in a secret cable to Kissinger Her (Indira Gandhi s) concern is whether the USA accepts the Indian regime She is not sure but that we would be content to see others like her overthrown She knows full well that we have done our share and more of bloody and dishonourable deeds Nothing will change her unless she is satisfied that the USA accepts her India She does not now think we had She thinks we are a profoundly selfish and cynical counter revolutionary force

Although Moynihan had been a failure as ambassador and failed later as U S representative in the United Nations he had a certain modicum of truthfulness He said very appropriately in a farewell interview published in *Washington Post* and the *New York Times* on December 15 1974 that Indo Am rican relations were thinner and getting thinner He addded We like each other but there s just not much there We ve gone from the stage where we were overinvolved in India to where we now pretend it (India) doe not exist In the past our relations were volatile and unstable up and down We have now reached a plateau We have regressed to a kind of stable perception of one another He said he could understand the fascination Americans had with China but he did not understand the corresponding disinterest in India I have been here two years and only one U S Congressman has come here and four U S Senators—one stayed sixteen hours and took his wife to the Taj and another was on his way to Bangladesh and had to change planes

There could be no better summing up than this of the relations between India and America The two countries slogged along from October 1974 till February 1975 with some amount of understanding and appreciation for each other s problems and concerns But the U S announcement in February 1975 of the lifting of its ten year-old embargo against selling lethal arms to south Asia (for all in ensive purposes to Pakistan) produced an uproar in India. Foreign minister Chavan angrily cancelled his scheduled

visit to Washington in March 1975 for the first working session of the Indo U S commission In April Washington expressed its annoyance publicly of the sharp criticism in India of the United States After a period of hibernation India announced in June 1975 that the time was ripe for establishing a new relationship In the meantime William Saxbe had become U S ambassador in India He was by no means an improvement over Moynihan He welcomed India s initiative in improving relations and in July Chavan proposed the rescheduling of the commission meeting for October 1975 India made two more friendly n oves As an unusual gesture of goodwill Indira Gandhi went to Saxbe s house for dinner India also revised her stand on the Puerto Rican issue which would have pleased Washington

But there was a setback when President Ford criticis ed the emergency in India On September 16 he said I think it is really very sad that 600 million people have lost what they had since the mid 1940s as I recall and I think it is a very sad development and I hope that any time there could be a restoration of democratic processes as we know them in the United States

Ford s policy towards India—and for that matter even Nixon s policy—is not his own in the sense that it is substantially an extension of the policies that successive American administrations have adopted towards India in the past In the case of Nixon he had even tried to move closer towards India soon after he came to power He desperately wanted to end the American involvement in Vietnam and hoped that India would be able to help him In 1969 he even received Dinesh Singh India s foreign minister at the White House—a reception which was not required by protocol but which showed his anxiety to take the help of India (if India could help) to end the Vietnam war Dinesh Singh told this writer It was my feeling that no arrangement for peace in Vietnam could be made without the participation of north Vietnam That is why in 1969 we talked of upgrading the Indian representation in north Vietnam We thought that after thi India could be

of use The Prime Minister approved of this line but backed out later The United States did protest to India when New Delhi announced that it wanted to upgrade its mission in Hanoi but as the foreign minister said these protests were normal and were made only for the record India could not ultimately take any initiative on Vietnam and Nixon soon lost all hopes of ending the Vietnam war with India s help

Washington naturally maintains close ties with countries which are prepared to support it and accept its view points The close ties it has established with Iran in the 1970s show that if there is a clear political and economic advantage to be obtained Washington would cultivate the friendship of any country big or small In the case of Iran perhaps the advantage is more economic than political or strategic and has to do with the energy crisis There has been no such advantage in the case of India All this goes to show that behind the pleasant diplomatic verbiage in Washington and New Delhi behind the effusive praise and fervent hopes behind the suspicion and indifference there lies the cold realpolitik of balance of power and spheres of influence The cause of U S disenchantment with India runs deeper than the U S President s prejudice or his desire to please China and Pakistan American policies are not the result of one man s personal vendetta nor is India s suspicion of U S intentions and good faith new Differences between the two countries have existed for a long while At the root of the differences were Washington s lack of respect for India and India s suspicion of the United States Two countries with differing political social and economic systems can work together if there is mutual respect even if it is born out of fear or if they find each other useful The United States and India have no great respect for each other and do not find each other particularly useful in furthering their respective policies

The United States also lacks a basic understanding of India as a very complex country with o many contradic

tions "[25] Political economic and social developments in India have been placed by Washington in outsized theoretical envelopes and labelled neatly to conform to pre conceived ideas about emerging societies Some U S experts have predicted that sooner or later fissiparous tendencies in India s caste ridden authoritarian and hierarchical social structure would break the nation They have found seeds of conflict and disruption in the caste system and doubted whether democracy would take root in the Indian soil whether India with its ponderous size and polyglot society would survive as a modern State Some of them have argued that left to themselves Indians lean leftward and that there would be violent revolutions in India—West Bengal would break loose Kerala would emerge as an independent communist State and the desire of the people of Tamil Nadu for an identity of their own would end in the creation of a separate Dravidistan

They have also come to the conclusion that India s economy would break down under the impact of her population explosion and that shortage of food would result in the under nourishment and starvation of millions Even when there was a potential breakthrough in agriculture they sounded sceptical India was victimised by sloppy and even malicious American scholarship and she was justified on that basis alone in seeking a measure of control over entry of U S scholars into India [26] The U S historians and sociologists who have interpreted India without bias have made little impact on the policy planners in Washington

Whatever be the reasons after two decades of association with India the United States finds it difficult to grow out of its paternal attitude towards India just as India finds it hard to forget the past suspicions and put her trust in the United States Indira Gandhi is much less comprehensible to the average American than Mahatma Gandhi

25 Indira Gandhi in an interview with *Time* magazine December 11 1972

26 *The New York Times* August 9 1972

It is difficult for Washington to understand an Indian prime minister who has no gratitude and is hard headed who could be unimpressed by Nixon s magnificent reception for her and could remain totally enigmatic Indira Gandhi s duplicity in 1971 according to Washington was totally un Indian Washington understood India of over two decades ago a lot better It accepted the India of Gandhi more than that of Nehru And now Nehru s India appears more acceptable than Indira Gandhi s In India too faith in the United States has decreased over the years The United States under Kennedy was more accept able to India than that under Johnson and Johnson s United States is more acceptable than Nixon s Ford is not particularly more attractive than Nixon

And yet paradoxically it may well happen that the two countries may move clo er to each other even at the political level in the years to come India s firmness her apparent unconcern about economic aid and her new em phasis on non alignment have produced favourable respon ses in Washington which is slowly shedding the illusion that India has a kind of dep ndent relationship with it The detente between the United States and the Soviet Union and China has created a sensitive reaction in India challenging the belief that any relationship with the United States is fraught with evil When the last vestiges of the cold war divisions disappear when co operation between the Soviet Union and the United States not only in arms limitation and exploration of the outer space but also in economic and political fields becomes real India would find it ea ier to move closer to the United States A working arrangem nt for co operation between the two countries e pecially in the economic field and for avoiding recri minatory political po tures is what India is now seeking to establish

The relationship between the two countries will acquire greater normalcy in the coming years But this will be on the basis of hard cold priorities set by America Some observers have argued that the inclination of the United States to play a reduced role in the sub continent while

the communist powers remain deeply involved represents a judgment that India and Pakistan are less important than once thought less threatened by external aggression [27] Whatever be the reason India is not a very important factor in Washington s global political strategy The main concern of the United States has been with its relationship at the political level with the Soviet Union and China and at the economic level with the countries of west Europe Japan Canada south America and west Asia At the secondary level are countries which though politically and economically unimportant are of strategic value to the United States Pakistan was and perhaps is one such country In the third category are countries which as a result of their size geographical position history or culture are in a position to have positive or negative influence on the countries mentioned earlier India belongs to this third category Washington cannot therefore be unduly bothered about pleasing India a country which cannot directly influence events in the United States in any tangible manner This one presumes is where one is confronted with two unrelated aspects of policy political verbiage and realpolitik The knowledge of these two aspects ought to illuminate all that the American leaders have said in the past praising India or debunking her underscoring the unity or the differences between the two countries

27 William J Brands *Ind a Pakistan and the Great Powers* Prager Publishers Inc New York 1972 p 261

2

INDIA RESTRUCTURES POLICY

THE American declaration of independence (from Britain) issued in 1776 was an inspiration to India in her fight for freedom She looked to the speeches and sayings of Thomas Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln with great admiration Indira Gandhi to whom India s policy towards the United States in the 1970s owes its inspiration in no small measure has said that she admires the will the aspirations and idealism of the great American people [1] Admiring this historical abstraction is one thing confronting its power drives another This has been India s problem all along It was particularly so in 1971 when the United States tried to intimidate India This is again India s problem in 1976

During the past two decades India s relations with the United States have had many ups and downs But the two countries were never before so acrimoniously divided as in 1971 Never before 1971 had the United States accused India of aggression with such vehemence and rancour The American protest when India took Goa in 1961 was mild compared to its denunciation of India in 1971 No American President before Nixon had devoted fourteen pages of his annual report to Congress to accuse India of aggression and

1 Indira Gandhi s letter of December 15 1971 to President Nixon

justify his actions a ainst her Never before had Washington favoured Pakistan with such total disregard for Indian sentiments and expressed its great unhappiness over the shifts in the military balance decisively towards India

A similar escalation was true of the Indian reaction also In 1971 for the first time India met American denunciation with matching defiance She accused Washington of interference in her internal affairs and of being untrue to the declaration of American independence Never before 1972 had an Indian prime minister warned the nation of the grave danger posed by the CIA Indira Gandhi directly criticised the CIA on two occasions in 1972 and said that its activities were on the in rease and we must continue our vigil - She has mad repeated references in 1974 and 1975 to external threat to India s stability After the war with China in 196? New Delhi had sought the CIA s assistance for the limited purpose of getting information on China But after the *New York Times* disclosure on CIA s involvement in th overthrow of governm nts in Asian and Latin American countries New D lhi has kept a close watch on its activitie in India A cabinet minister told this writer that New Delhi had evidence that the CIA had helped a political party in Bombay The CIA is believed to have assisted some other political parties also It had collected information on India s nuclear programme and in 1965 procured for the dossi r on Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri a comprehensive report on the analysis of Shastri s blood [3] What worried New Delhi more than the theft of clinical reports was the influence the CIA sought to have in the social economic and political institutions in India and the contact with anti national forces The scare about the CIA show d how distrustful New Delhi was of the United States and the denunciation of the CIA indicated how openly critical official New Delhi was of Washington

The coolness in the ties between the two countries was primarily due to the stiff att tude adopted by the

2 *The Statesman* Au ust 14 1972

3 From a source which likes to remain anonymous

United States towards India But it was also the result perhaps to a lesser degree of the shift in India s attitude towards the United States and in her general policy responses to domestic and international pressures. Andrew Shonfield director of the British Royal Institute of International Affairs in London supports this view He said in an interview in New Delhi on January 12 1974 that it was India s independent policy making which was responsible in the first instance for the worsening of relations between India and America In the past whenever Washington adopted a hostile stand India had not openly defied th United States Even when there was a blow up there used to be an escape valve which enabled the two countries to carry on a dialogue understand each other s viewpoints and patch up the differences In 1971 this escape valve was shut resulting in a total breakdown of the lines of communication between the two countries for many months India felt deeply insulted by Washington s callousness and was defiant Indira Gandhi s deep rooted perhaps well founded suspicion of official Washington and her lack of inhibition about giving expression to pungent political views might have contributed towards the worsening of the relations between India and the United States Although India s attitude was not shaped by the personal prejudice or pique of anyone in New Delhi the background and experience of India s policy planners nonetheless played a role

P N Haksar T N Kaul and D P Dhar were the principal policy planners who advised Indira Gandhi on the diplomatic moves on Bangladesh and recommended a policy which they thought was in consonance with national interests P N Haksar had a decisive role in shaping not only the policy on Bangladesh and New Delhi s attitude towards Washington but also India s general political posture He performed a unique and sensitive role Kaul the foreign secretary was earlier ambassador in Moscow and was responsible for establishing better relations between India and the Soviet Union after Moscow's coolness towards India in the 19ↄ0 He is a career

mat who has no use for ideology a polished performer and an example of mature Indian diplomacy D P Dhar who succeeded Kaul as ambassador in Moscow and became the chairman of the policy planning committee of th external affairs ministry in 1971 had a hand in b inging India and the Soviet Union closer He had earned the reputation of being a tough ambassador A diplomat who had watched him at close quarters said to this writer that Dhar was non-diplomatic and had shocked other diplomats by giving the impression that he bel e/ed Moscow was only an extension of New Delhi

At the head of the team was Swaran Singh an able negotiator who had the knack of giving away nothing but taking as much as he could from others and who became perhaps the most durable foreign minister of India after Nehru. At the apex was Indira Gandhi the supreme boss who made most of the vital policy decisions unlike the previous prime minister who had depended heavily on his colleagues and advisers The new team which advised Indira Gandhi in 1971 had a leftist image but it was free from ideological inhibitions and the policies it recommended wer not strictly ideological but rational and pragmatic

For a long while India s foreign relations had been in a flux Apart from the oc asional expression of anguish over international events India had not made any significant moves in foreign affairs after the Tashkent summit meeting in January 1966 at which the Soviet Union me diat d between India and Pakistan Despite minor provocations from the United States India continued to seek American friendship and swear by the policy of non alignment She reacted to international events on an *ad hoc* basis her main obsessions being Pakistan and China Although Moscow and Peking were disillusioned with each other New Delhi could not take advantage of the situation as it was exercised over Soviet aid to Pakistan [4]

4 New Delhi s protest to Mc arm
Pakistan was one of the
to any country

India took some interest in the Arab Israeli war in 1967 and also tried to co-operate with Asian nations on economic matters She tried to cultivate the south east Asian countries Indira Gandhi visited most of the countries of the region she went as far as Japan and Indonesia But New D lhi was not able to make any serious impression abroad at a time when great changes were taking place in the power alignments and internal political structures of these countries

Japan had emerged as a big power ready to compete with China and the Soviet Union for big power status The pull out of the British from south east Asia was an important event whether it left a vacuum or not New Delhi was not able to influence events in this region and was more a spectator than an actor The many paralyses of India s foreign policy—on the Soviet arms deal with Pakistan non alignment Soviet action in Czechoslovakia and the Rabat conference of Muslim nations from which the Indian delegation was asked to quit—made India ineffective in the councils of the world She showed little interest in world affairs except in associating herself as a routine exercise from time to time with the protests against colonial and racial oppression in Asia and Africa From the beginning of 1967 to the middle of 1970 India took no initiative in foreign affairs [5] Dinesh Singh who was foreign minister during the period admitted to this writer that because the new administration under Indira Gandhi required time to consolidate its position inside the country it could not take initiatives in foreign affairs The policy it pursued was one of carrying on merely responding to situations Dinesh Singh said that even at that time there was however a policy the central thread of which consisted of India s allegiance to non-alignment closeness to the Soviet Union

5 By a curious coincidence that was the time when China also had no foreign policy and was preoccupied with internal problems after the cultural revolution She had to shed some of her ambitious programmes in Africa and give up some gains in Asia

and improvement of relations with neighbours

From the middle of 1971 India showed a new boldness which was reflected in her attitude towards arms aid Vietnam non alignment and the superpowers After the general elections in 1971 when Indira Gandhi was able to push aside some of the internal problems that had plagued her Government and take a close look at India s foreign relations she found many areas of neglect New Delhi realised that in a divided world where old international alignments were fast dissolving and new ones taking shape India had to have a new approach She could no longer take for granted the friendship of either the United States or the Soviet Union The ambiguity in her ties with the superpowers had to be corrected The ties with her neighbours had to be strengthened She made up her mind not to over-emphasise the policy of non alignment but continued to pay lip service to its correctness The euphoria of the past two decades over the friendship and solidarity of the non aligned countries disappeared New Delhi found that mere sentimental affiliations did not help India to face her own problems or help others to solve theirs

The external affairs ministry although left-oriented at some levels was patterned on western models and believed in elaborate studies to fit theories and in discovering similarities with other countries The new task before the foreign office was to stress India s national interests and not particularly discover similarities The days when India could disregard the imperatives of national security were over long long ago A story this writer heard in Washington goes that there was a time when the urgent secret messages that the ambassador sent to India could reach John Foster Dulles the U S secretary of state much earlier than they reached New Delhi creating the comical situation in which the ambassador expressed support to U S proposals in person to the secretary of state at an evening party while the latter knew that the ambassador had sent a communication in the morning condemning the proposals This sounds apocryphal but nevertheless shows how slack India could have been about security Indian diplomacy has

certainly matured over the years not only in guarding secrets but also in formulating policy

But for a long while the Indian foreign office had lagged behind in modernising its attitude and stressing the importance of national security After India s diplomatic debacle in 1962—a defeat more disastrous than the military defeat—Indian foreign office tried to improve itself Till then foreign policy was made largely on the basis of impulses from above (Nehru and Krishna Menon) which the officials translated into tasks policies and programmes India was lucky that these impulses were more or less sound in the context of the larger issues like anti imperialism anti colonialism non alignment and *panchsheel* But they failed when conflicting interests had to be ironed out and India had to deal with its powerful neighbours In 1963 Nehru considered a proposal for setting up a policy planning organisation in the external affairs ministry but nothing much came of it although as a result of this proposal position papers were prepared on a number of issues When Lal Bahadur Shastri was Prime Minister no new initiative was taken in modernising the foreign office In 1966 when Swaran Singh was foreign minister a policy planning cell was set up with the blessings of Indira Gandhi An effort was made not to let policy be made by itinerant foreign office officials posted to New Delhi from time to time A joint secretary was put in charge of the cell J S Mehta after his return from China became the first official to head the cell He has deservedly become in 1976 the foreign secretary of India From 1968 to 1970 K R Narayanan was in charge of the cell When Dinesh Singh was foreign minister he tried to give policy planning a more rigid institutional framework

The precedent bound minds of academicians in the ministry proud of their departmental studies and position papers continued to put greater emphasis on history and theory than on the present and practical aspects of policy Their smugness was shaken a bit —only a little bit—when Indira Gandhi began to lean heavily on her own secretariat for making moves during the crisis over east Bengal Before she wrote the famous letter to Nixon on December 15 1971

in which she chided him for his blind support to Yahya Khan the pond rous draft of the letter made by the foreign office had to be scrapped and a new one prepared in the Prime Minister s office [6]

Caught in the flux of a fast-changing international scene and a cruel crisis in the sub continent India had to act under conditions of stress and uncertainty *Panchsheel* and non alignment were relevant in an earlier age when the simplistic divisions of the co d war had allowed bridge personalities like Nehru to have better relations with friends and foes alike It now became important for India to have d pendable allies build her own strength and influence and take independent decisions The old habits of the foreign office and undue emphasis on niceties of etiquette and good personal relations had to go

The foreign offi e realised in 1971 that non alignment of the 1950 vintage was dead although its skeleton tucked away as a classified item in the south block of the Government secretariat in New Delhi was sometimes paraded in public *to scare critics India was no longer non aligned* as she was a decade ago But paradoxically in 1971 she seemed a little more independent *than before* her *initiative* a *little* less cramped her policies a little less beset with compromises She could treat Washington and Moscow alike and could also cultivate more effectively the medium powers like Britain France and Japan New Delhi gave the impression that it was jealous of its independence and did not want to capitulate to any superpower

In 1969 when Moscow proposed a treaty of mutual friendship and co operation between India and the Soviet *Union* New *Delhi was not in a position to enter into* such

6 If the academicians in the foreign office had their way they would have perhaps avoided the two grammati al mistakes and the error about the date of Kissinger s visit to India but they would have made the letter less human and more verbose (The letter said that Kissinger visited India in August 1971 This was a mistake His visit took place in July that year)

a bilateral agreement Throughout 1969 and 1970 India s attitude was cautious but not negative and New Delhi in formed Moscow that it wanted more time to make a decision about entering into a bilateral treaty With the background of internal crisis in the Congress party and the prospect of having to face the rightist anti Soviet Jan Sangh as the principal opposition party in the general elections in 1971 Indira Gandhi did not consider it expedient to have a a treaty with the Soviet Union [7]

When India found that the United States followed a policy of ignoring her interests and strengthening its relations not only with Pakistan but also with China it became necessary for her to take a fresh look at the proposed treaty New Delhi hesitated waited and hoped that it could avoid a definite commitment The massive military assistance—open and clandestine—that the Nixon administration gave Pakistan was a great provocation but India continued her policy of friendship towards Washington She knew that Pakistan with all the military aid she had received from the United States and China was in no position to pose a serious threat to India She was therefore able to ignore the U.S tilt towards Pakistan which in any case was nothing new for in the past two decades Washington had all along maintained better relations with Pakistan than with India But when the United States took active steps to normalise its relations with China the policy makers in New Delhi found their options narrowed

New Delhi decided to sign the treaty of friendship with Moscow after Kissinger s secret visit to Peking in July 1971 The timing of the treaty was influenced not by the Bangla desh crisis not by the military threat posed by Pakistan but by Kissinger s visit to China and its significance to the power structure in the world New Delhi wanted to match the dramatic thrust of the visit with an equally dramatic move Soon after Kissinger went to Peking India finalised the

7 For details of the evolution of the treaty please see the writer's forthcoming book on India s relations with the Soviet Union

draft of the treaty which had been in New Delhi for many months and over which earlier there were minor differences. India signed it in a hurry in August 1971 It made a big impact on events in south Asia Although it was not aimed against the United States or Pakistan it threw out of gear th diplomatic moves of Washington and Islamabad It changed the political climate in India and gave the nation a new confidence to face Pakistan which had the backing of the United States and China Earlier there was a sense of despondency and uncertainty about India s ability to solve the refugee problem In fact a former minister had even predicted that Indira Gandhi s Government would fall over this issue After the treaty was signed the critics of the Government fell silent and even those Indians who had advocated closer ties with the United States saw some merit in the new alliance

What made it easy for the policy planners in New Delhi to move closer to the Soviet Union and de emphasise non alignment was the hostile posture of the United States which in collaboration with China and Pakistan posed a formidable threat to India s security in 1971 For a generation India had been accustomed to taking her stand on world issues on high moral grounds—anti fascism anti colonialism and anti imperialism There was a phase of anti communism also In the new un ideological era when President Nixon could go to Peking and Mao Tse tung could shake hands with Nixon India found she could discard old inhibitions about appearing to be non aligned and agreeable to all countries The speed with which the Indo-Soviet treaty was finalised and signed showed that India had acquired the power to react to world events with speed courage and total independence

D P Dhar was the first Indian leader to redefine non alignment He said on August 15 1971 that non alignment did not mean that India could be unaligned against the interests of her own security Non alignment was not sacro sanct and should be discarded if it did not suit India s interests He said that it was not a static concept but was capable of being adjusted to the needs of the situation Yet

relapsing verbally into the old mood of the foreign office he added that the Indo Soviet treaty did not mean any fundamental departure from the basic concept of non alignment [8] The Prime Minister he self never believed that non alignment was an end in itself and in 1971 her faith in non alignment even as a pragmatic policy wavered She declared in Bombay in October 1971 that India might even abandon non alignment if it was in her interest to do so But she added that she had not yet charged the policy [9] The whole concept of non alignment had altered with the new alignment of the world powers India found that non alignment was not an exclusive and absolute policy But for want of another idiom Indian leaders continued to call their policy non aligned In fact after the threat to India s nation al security in 1971 was removed Indian leaders became vociferous about their faith in non alignment and at Algiers in September 1973 they played a very active role in infus ing interest in non alignment among nations which had lost faith in the policy but which liked the membership of the the non aligned club as a matter of privilege

New Delhi s boldness in discarding its parrot like protestation of non alignment in 1972 worried Washington American leaders made frantic requests to India to remain non aligned although Washington had once called India s non alignment immoral Nixon said that we also have a continuing interest in India s independence and non align ment [10] India suspected that the United States wanted to drive a wedge between her and the other non aligned coun tries particularly Indonesia and Yugoslavia and isolate her by alluding to India s ties with Moscow and accusing her of being in the Soviet orbit Nehru Nasser Nkrumah Bandaranaike the stalwarts of the non aligned world are dead Tito is the sole survivor When Tito visited Washing ton five days prior to Indira Gandhi s visit in 1971 he was welcomed with lavish ceremony and full military honours

8 *The Times of India* August 16 1971
9 *The Times of India* October 15 1971
10 *Report by Nixon to the Congress* USIS 1972 p 169

and was addressed by Nixon as a world statesman of the first rank On the White House lawn Nixon laid on a colourful display of military pomp rarely equalled even by an administration as addicted to ceremony as his own He endorsed the Yugoslav way of socialism and in the joint communique issued at the end of the visit expressed identity of views with Tito on many world issues Indira Gandhi s visit a week later was at a lower level and did not produce even a statement from the White House Nixon thought Indira Gandhi had changed India s policy and that India had moved closer to Moscow and was suspicious of Nixon s efforts to create a detente with China

The stresses and strains that developed in the relationship between the two countries in 1971 have to be evaluated against the background not only of U S attitudes but also of the changes in India s policy As India moved away from the old moorings and sought a new position in world affairs the United States became more disillusioned with India and found less use for her The disillusionment was mutual As the United States edged closer to China New Delhi found Washington a shifty ally and gave up the hope of getting a fair deal from it in achieving India s objectives In 1971 India s main objective was not the creation of Bangladesh nor the dismemberment of Pakistan but the return of the ten million refugees who had crossed into India from Bangladesh The creation of an independent Bangladesh was only a means to an end India found that in Washington while there was sympathy and even money for the refugees and support for Pakistan there was no urgency in creating conditions in east Bengal that would enable the refugees to return Since Pakistan was beholden to the United States New Delhi expected that Washington would put pressure on Islamabad to stop the killings But Washington would not condemn the killings and would not appeal to Pakistan to stop it Instead it sent more arms to Pakistan

Swaran Singh made repeated visits to the United States to plead with U S officials to understand India s case and to tell them of the crisis that was brewing in the sub conti

nant All this made no difference to Washington which wanted India not to take any precipitate action till it could sort things out When New Delhi became convinced after repeated contacts with U S officials at various levels that the United States did not particularly care whether the re fugees returned or not as long as there was no disturbanc to peace in the sub continent it launched a massive diplo matic campaign to discredit Pakistan and the United States It sent abroad every minister who could be spared and every member of Parliament who could articulate India s anguish India s diplomatic offensive was so con sistent and intense and the events in east Bengal so ghastly that the United States found itself isolated on the Bangla desh issue even from its traditional allies

The moral political and humanitarian aspects of the crisis were solidly in favour of India and against Pakistan New Delhi exploited these aspects to its maximum ad vantage in its diplomatic offensive The legal aspects of the crisis which some experts thought were against both *India and Pakistan were fortunately for India blurred by* the gravity of the human suffering India had her own logic and justification for the actions she took Here was a vast human spectacle—history in the making—and cer tainly it left little room for India to worry about the filigrees of law This vast human spectacle did not evoke any comment from the Nixon administration which *refused to recognise the political moral humanitarian or* even the legal aspects of the crisis remained unmoved by the human tragedy and throughout stuck to its original position of unqualified support to Pakistan

New Delhi was surprised at the hostile American reaction while the war lasted But soon after the ceasefire was declared it was able to relax and laugh at its own fears about the U S actions some of which like the des patch of the *Enterprise* bordered on the comical It was able to forget Washington s hostility and express its willingness to start a new dialogue on the basis of reci procal respect Americans should be given credit for their very swift change of policy which enabled New Delhi to,

soften its resistance to the United States It is believed that even the Soviet leaders were surprised by the sudden change in American policy which by March 1972 put the United States absolutely in the heart of Dacca as an ally

A few months after the war India endorsed Nixon s statement that enmities between nations as between individuals were not immutable When Nixon sent John Connally to India in July 1972 New Delhi did not oppose the opening of a dialogue It was however cautious in its response Indira Gandhi said in August 1972 that India was quite willing to forget what had happened and to make a new start with the U S She added in the same breath But the Nixon administration has shown no real desire to improve its relations with India The American people—that is another story It is never too late or too early to be friends She had no faith in Washington s words and said the United States had supported regimes that were alienated from their own people—in Pakistan in Vietnam throughout the world In fact if we look at recent history we must ask whether America with all its talk of democracy is really supporting democracy anywhere 11

Three months later in an article in the October 1972 issue of *Foreign Affairs* she set forth in greater detail India s attitude to the United States After criticising U S policies which impinged seriously on our vital interests she wrote that India did not believe in permanent estrangement and admired the achievements of the American people Responding to Nixon s call for a dialogue she declared that India was ready to join in any serious effort to arrive at a deeper appreciation of each other s points of view—and to improve relations B K Nehru a former Indian ambassador to the United States and Kewal Singh a senior official of the foreign office visited Washington in November 1972 on a probing mission and reported that the United States was not as hard towards India as before India was passing through a severe drought and required

11 Interview on August 10 1972 to *Parade* magazine New York

import of foodgrains to tide over the acute economic crisis in 1972. She did not spurn U S advances Finance minister Chavan s visit to Washington in November was used to t ll U S leaders that India stood firm in her resolve to be independent but was willing to co operate with the United States on terms of equality

India had in a sense foreseen the changes that took place in the power equation in Asia after Nixon s visit to China But she had not visualised the changes that emerged as a result of Nixon s visit to the Soviet Union in 1972 The U S dialogue with Peking and Moscow coupled with the seating of China in the United Nations the bilateral talks between south Korea and north Korea the cautious dialogue between China and Japan and above all the cessation of hostilities in Vietnam made a profound change in the geo political situation in Asia The strategic balance laboriously established by the superpowers after the second world war had dissolved The CENTO and the SEATO the main multilateral U S sponsored military alliances in Asia were practically dead even if they twitched occasionally Confrontation became a bad word and Nixon himself replaced it wherever possible with negotiation India had to reformulate her attitude and adjust herself to these new realities Her victory in the war with Pakistan in 1971 became unimportant to herself in the face of the great changes that swept the world in 1972. Her attitude towards the United States as well as the other major powers had to be realigned Swaran Singh declared in Lok Sabha in December 1972 that India had much in common with the United States and that there was no basic conflict between the interests of India and the United States in this region or elsewhere This pragmatic somersault by the Indian foreign minister was clearly dictated by the politics of expediency and perhaps was a measure of the maturity Indian foreign policy was acquiring India was at last adjusting herself to the cynical multi polarity of powers

The end of 1972 saw a rapid change in New Delhi s attitude The team that had master minded India s policies

in 1971 had broken up This break up also contributed to the adjustment of policies In 1972 D P Dhar left the foreign office He was moved to the economic planning ministry in New Delhi P N Haksar retired in early 1973 T N Kaul also retired but was posted to Washington as ambassador India began to unwind its opposition to the United States and Indian leaders became more and more vocal about the greatness of non alignment and the independence of India—independence not only in regard to its ties with the United States but also with the Soviet Union India declared that she was prepared to normalise relations with the United States on reciprocal terms Her leaders argued that if the Soviet Union and China could move closer to the United States there was no reason why India could not do the same and normalise relations with the United States

India s criticism of the U S escalation of the war in Vietnam and the brutal bombing of Hanoi and Haiphong in 1972 became a dignified exercise resented for its softness by the radicals both inside and outside the Government At the Calcutta session of the Congress party in December 1972 the radicals tried to force the leadership to take a strong stand on Vietnam But Swaran Singh rejected the near unanimous demand made by the delegates to use the word condemnation with reference to the U S role in Vietnam war He pleaded that members should not insist on using words which did not mean much and said We have spelt out the condemnation in the resolution instead of using the word by itself The resolution spoke of the most horrible tragedy in man s recorded history but the United States was not mentioned by name and was described only as an outside power When this writer asked Swaran Singh why there was this reluctance he said that in 1972 his objective was to respond favourably to the feelers thrown by the United States to improve the relations

The White House reacted with a show of enthusiasm for India In a rather unusual move presumably on the initiative of Kissinger it named Daniel Moynihan as U S

ambassador to New Delhi which had been without a U S head of mission for six months It was unusual because Moynihan was known to be a critic of Nixon s policy on India He was a member of the U S delegation to the United Nations in December 1971 and had strongly criticised Washington s policy towards India A week after the war he had said that what happened in east Bengal was done by stupid and arrogant men in power and it would have been surprising if India had not acted as she did In the appointment of Moynihan a cross between Bowles and Galbraith some observers detected a ray of hope But others noted that Bowles and Galbraith had found it hard to dispel areas of darkness in Washington as far as India was concerned and Moynihan was not going to find the task easier Moynihan landed in India with a *mantra* on his lips—a *mantra* borrowed from Nixon—about the maturity of the relationship between the two countries This *mantra* picked up by Swaran Singh and later by Kissinger has stuck But no one has explained what this means

The differences between the two countries never seem to get resolved and new shadows keep falling on them This pattern of sudden bursts of light and long spells of darkness does not offer any hope of a durable understanding However much India tries to forget the past and concentrate on the present and the future the old wounds keep on bothering her In March 1973 New Delhi accused the U S administration of indifference towards India Indira Gandhi said that from some of the attitudes of the American administration it seemed to us that they were not interested in India whereas we feel that for a country of India s size it is very important that it should be strong and stable [12] Although in May 1973 Indira Gandhi asked Congress MPs not to nettle the United States she also said that India had to be on guard against U S actions Even after Nixon s statement in May 1973 which offered India a small place in the sun India continued to suspect Washington s intentions She feared that there was a

12. Interview with *Ashai Shumbum* in March 1973

danger of the convergence of global vested interests against India

New Delhi was worried about Washington s decision to sell $4 billion worth of arms to Iran Kuwait and Saudi Arabia The appointment of Richard Helmes a former chief of the CIA as ambassador to Iran together with the propo al to induct about 11 000 U S personnel into Iran was a dangerous portent esp cially when the king of Iran had said that we must see to it that Pakistan does not fall to pieces India feared that apart from the instability the U S arms deal would create in west Asia some of the arms might be used against her in a future war Althou_h this fear persists in the minds of Indian military strategists the rapprochement between India and Iran in 1974 and the close ties established between them after Indira Gandhi s visit to Tehran in May 1974 have made Iran s intentions less suspect in New Delhi The rift bet ween Pakistan and Iran which came about as a result of Bhutto hobnobbing with Colonel Gadaffi of Libya whom the king of Iran dislikes has helped India to get over her fear of Iran s military build up

Another U S action which agitated India for a while was the decision announced in March 1973 to end the arms embargo and supply Pakistan $14 1 million worth of armoured personnel carriers military spares and air craft engines Nixon himself defended the decision and wanted India to believe that it involved commitments that were made before we got here (in the White House) and that he could not di regard commitments that were made during Johnson administration Swaran Singh ex pressed the fear that the lifting of the embargo would threaten India s security and cause a setback to the process of restoring normal relations between the two countries He said it would encourage military elements in Pakistan and cast a great burden on India s security India had legiti mate doubts whether the United States would keep its word that it had no intention to supply tanks aircraft and other lethal weapons to Pakistan for U S officials had prevari cated in the past

It is true that Pakistan is smaller and weaker than India and has the right to arm itself against a possible attack from her powerful neighbour There is fear in Pakistan of her neighbour s intentions especially after what had happened in 1971 But the history of American backed aggressions for instance the aggression in west Asia by small countries shows that these countries can become a serious threat to their big and powerful neighbours Even the massive Soviet arms aid and the presence of Soviet airmen in Egypt were no guarantee against Israeli aggression It was again the political and military support that the United States gave Taiwan that divided China and the United States for two decades Only when the United States during Kissinger s visit to Peking agreed to change its policy towards Taiwan did China reconsider her policy of total hostility to the United States The giving of arms to a country however small in size dominated by a military clique and harbouring a grouse against its neighbours can be interpreted as an act of aggression by the neighbours

New Delhi cannot object to legitimate U S aid to Pakistan to rebuild her economy and even arms aid to help her strengthen the armed forces for defence against external aggression But what New Delhi fears is that despite all the verbal acrobatics to define spares and new supplies the United States is committed to make Pakistan a military power with more striking force than is warranted by her size and defence requirements 13 Kissinger s statement in September 1973 that the United States would not engage in new supplies of arms to Pakistan was welcomed in New Delhi But Kissinger s cannot be the last word Cambodia was being plastered by U S air

13 Joseph Sisco the U S assistant secretary of state said in March 1973 that Washington would be concerned about any policy that would be a new threat to the integrity of Pakistan and Kenneth Rush the U S under secretary of state said that he could make no commitment as to what our future action will be about supplies of arms to Pakistan

by a new economic order based on equality and justice He feared that dev loped nations were drifting away from the concept of interdependence towards traditional colonialist attitu es which reflected the usurpation by a small minority of countries to own wealth and wield power India s experience has been that the United States wants third world countries to accept its economic philosophy and even vote in the United Nations and other world forums according to its dictates if the nations are not to be considered hostile

Chavan said to this writer that if the United States wants to be friendly it should accept the very basic fact that on important world events India had her own perception and *policy according to which we would like to act* He added But they want yes men They want client States India can not accept this position Our size our potential strength our traditions and heritage do not allow us to become a client State We shall never be one The foreign minister realised that there were basic differences in the outlook of the two countries The national interests of the two *countries might not clash But their (U S) global policy* clashes with India s national interests Their world view and our world view differ Their interests in Asia their assessments are not the same as ours I am afraid they are not He referred to the differing viewpoints of India and the United States on Diego Garcia and on Angola The United States however agrees that there is no *conflict of national interests and has even started* assuring India that she is a major power in south Asia Chavan said the relations between the two countries should im prove and steps would be taken to improve them He repeated what Kissinger had said in Washington in November 1975 about the usefulness of the institutional arrangement of the Indo U S joint commission and of insulating it *from the fluctuations of day to day* political passions from the conflicting interests of the two countries

If these conflicting interests are to be reconciled the United States has to accept that India has her own nation

al interests to safeguard and will act according to her perceptions India on her part has to recognise the global role the United States wants to play and understand that differences between India and the United States are inevi table but need not put each other on a collusion course There are areas where the two countries could work together with mutual advantage The establishment of trade links with reciprocal respect is always desirable But unless there is an effort to identify common interests it would not be possible to develop strong political bonds especially between a superpower like the United States and a country like India which does not like to play a secondary role There seems to have been no success in identifying common interests between the two countries during the past many decades may be because there is none It is however possible that common interests could develop in the future if the leaders of the two countries work for it and if the spirit of the detente spreads to areas outside Europe and the United States The lack of common interests need not prevent the two countries from norma- lising relations and improving trade between them What they are attempting to do now with some success is to improve commercial ties and avoid recrimination India's membership of the nuclear club and her determination to go ahead with a nuclear peace policy if not a deterrent policy have inspired respect although as yet the base of the power structure has not changed in any big way India today commands more respect than before and that is a great gain for her

3

1971 THE WATERSHED

THE sharp difference in the attitudes of India and the United States and the inflexible positions they adopted during the crisis in east Bengal exposed to the world for the first time the deep fissures that had existed for a long while in the ties between the two countries Before taking a hard line India made repeated attempts to make the United States understand her point of view and her diffi culties There was no corresponding effort by the United States to communicate with India The steps taken by India to meet the threat posed by the mass influx of re fugees from east Bengal were in no way directed against the national interests of the United States a country geogra phically far removed from east Bengal India s main con cern was to safeguard her national interests which she felt were threatened by the unprecedented upheaval in an area close to her borders and by the presence of refugees in the sensitive states in east India

India supported the liberation movement in east Bengal out of immediate political considerations as well as com pulsions of history She had a certain softness towards east Pakistan and was less suspicious of east Bengalis than of west Pakistanis Even after the details of the partition of India were settled and Lord Mountbatten the last Viceroy of India started the countdown of the days for the transfer of power by Britain leaders of east and west Bengal had thought of a plan to declare undivided Bengal a sove reign State—a third State besides India and Pakistan H S

Suhrawardy the chief minister of the undivided Bengal Fazlul Huq the east Bengal Muslim leader Sarat Chandra Bose and Shyama Prasad Mukherjee (on the initiative of Bose and at his residence) had worked out a plan to declare Bengal an independent State Suhrawardy had even asked some senior non Bengali officers of the civil service to give their consent to serve the sovereign State of Bengal if it were born and some of them had agreed to serve the State The plan fizzled out in thirty six hours 1

In the 1950s even after the traumatic experience of the communal killings that followed the partition of India east Bengal Muslim leaders had discussed with west Bengal leaders a plan for a possible re union of the two Bengals Some west Pakistan leaders suspicious of east Bengalis were not averse to India absorbing east Bengal provided Kashmir was handed over to them In 1957 just before Feroz Khan Noon the foreign minister of Pakistan was due to go to New York to attend the general assembly of the United Nations he was invited by Nehru to New Delhi During an after dinner chat at Nehru s residence Noon asked J N Sahni an Indian delegate to the United Nations and former editor of the *Hindustan Times* to request Nehru to give up Kashmir and in return absorb east Pakistan Noon suggested that India and Pakistan could have an agreement under which at the end of two or three years this arrangement could be worked out Sahni spoke to Nehru about Noon s suggestion but the Indian Prime Minister laughed it away Nehru is reported to have said that east Bengal would in any case step out of Pakistan sooner or later and added I have already a lot of trouble restraining Fazlul Huq and Shyama Prasad Mukherjee from discussing about re union of the two Bengals

In 1953 when west Pakistani leaders negotiated a military alliance with the United States east Pakistanis

1 A non Bengali I C S officer whose consent was asked for by H S Suhrawardy gave this information to the writer

had protested against it In the west the protest was feeble Maulana Bhashani s Awami League [2] along with other democratic parties in east Pakistan observed September 11 1953 as a protest day against U S imperialism The National Awami Party formed by Bhashani in 1957 with its base in east Pakistan continued to oppose U S military alliances and took a stand similar to that of India It declared that international problems including Pakistan s differences with India should be resolved by peaceful means and through the United Nations Indians believed that the east Pakistanis were less chauvinistic than the west Pakistanis

A certain bond had existed between the two Bengals and the exploitation and oppression of east Bengal by the western wing of Pakistan had not gone unnoticed in India But New Delhi did not trust east Bengal Muslims and had no desire whatsoever to absorb east Pakistan for it was here that the demand for the formation of the separate Muslim state of Pakistan was first raised The conflict between the two wings of Pakistan continued to be a matter of serious interest to India After the establishment of military dictatorship in Pakistan the rift between the two wings became more pronounced In January 1965 when General Ayub Khan was re elected President he defeated Miss Fatima Jinnah the sister of the father of the nation only by a narrow margin in the east He received 20 720 votes and she 18 080 The claim made by *Dawn* the Pakistani newspaper that the election was overwhelmingly in favour of Ayub Khan was true not of east Pakistan but only of the west wing where he received 28 927 votes against Miss Jinnah s 10 263

India believed that the military dictatorship in Pakistan was able to get greater support in the western wing because it exploited the fear in the west that if democratic elections were held west Pakistan would come under Bengalis who were in a majority in Pakistan The west

2 The League split into two in 1957 and Bhashani formed the National Awami Party

Pakistanis dominated the government armed forces and industry and did not want to give up their privileged position despite the fact that east Bengalis were educated and sophisticated The massive arms and economic aid the United States gave Pakistan helped the military dictatorship to strengthen itself in the west The *Pakistan Times* a west Pakistan paper in Lahore said The exploitation of east Pakistan by west Pakistan can be judged from the fact that one can see west Pakistani officials in every village of east Pakistan [3] It was therefore not surprising that east Bengalis made no secret of their lukewarm interest in the Kashmir dispute [4] New Delhi had all along watched with quizzical interest the conflicts and divisions inside Pakistan and was careful not to hurt east Bengal s sentiments

During the India Pakistan war of 1965 if she wanted India could have dealt a crushing blow to the eastern wing of Pakistan The Pakistani Air Force was reported to have operated from airfields in east Pakistan and attacked Indian planes on the ground In spite of these and other provocations India desisted from taking action against east Bengal and limited her operations to the west India believed that Bengalis were not as guilty as west Pakistanis of waging war against her

However Zulfikar Ali Bhutto the foreign minister of Pakistan claimed that India did not attack east Pakistan as she was frightened that the Chinese would intervene He said that during the war in 1965 there was a pact between Pakistan and China and he implied that India did not attack east Pakistan because of this pact [5] He wanted the world to believe that China would have entered the war if India had marched into east Pakistan Some observers thought that he was not making a baseless statement for a *New York Times* report had said that the defence of east Pakistan was the subject matter of discussion between

3 July 29 1965
4 *The New York Times* September 12 1965
5 *National Assembly of Pakistan Debates* March 15 1965

U S and Chinese representatives in Warsaw during the war Bhutto later claimed that the Chinese had sent a *message to India through a U S ambassador* asking New Delhi to stay out of east Pakistan As far as India was *concerned in 1965 she was against the opening of a second* front in the east because she felt reluctant to harm east Bengalis and there *would be no military gain in the east*

After the massive verdict given by the people of east Bengal in the general elections in *1970* in favour of the six point formula for autonomy put before the electorate by the Awami League led by Sheikh Mujibur Rehman India kept a close watch on the events in east Bengal When Bhutto and other west Pakistan leaders frustrated the will of the people of east Bengal by not allowing their elected representatives to meet and the east Bengalis rose in revolt in March 1971 there was a spontaneous and sympathetic response from India

Within a week of the west Pakistani crack down on east Bengal the policy planners in Delhi saw the danger to India s se urity posed by the west Pakistani military action in east Bengal Indira Gandhi condemned the repression and moved a resolution in Parliament on March 31 demanding the immediate cessation of the massacre of the defenceless people of east Bengal A few days later the All India Congress Committee adopted a resolution pledging India s support to the people of east Bengal Pakistan interpreted India s support as a hostile act and accused India of encouraging the secessionists and interfering in her internal affairs She would have been perfectly justified in accusing India of interference if the trouble in Pakistan were contained within her borders India did not think that the Pakistani repression and the consequent influx of millions of refugees into India were the internal affairs of Pakistan In April 1971 both the Soviet Union and China reacted to the situation in east Bengal because both recognised that the situation was a threat to peace in south Asia and was not an internal issue While Moscow asked Pakistan to show restraint Peking declared that it would support Pakistan as usual in the face of an

attack by India Washington was tight lipped and refused to restrain Pakistan ostensibly on the ground that the massacre was an internal affair

The reports of brutal killings in east Bengal and the large influx of refugees agitated the Indian people There was a strong demand in India for recognising the Re public of Bangladesh the provisional government of which was proclaimed on April 17 New Delhi was against the immediate recognition of the provisional government because it feared that such recognition might precipitate an armed conflict between India and Pakistan It however held Islamabad responsible for the trouble and declared that west Pakistan should create such conditions forthwith as would facilitate the return of the refugees from India to east Pakistan

Washington did not recognise the dimensions of the tragedy in east Bengal and even if it did it encouraged Pakistani repression by not giving public expression to its fears No statement disapproving Islamabad s repressive measures in east Bengal was issued by the United States On the other hand Washington was too eager to find fault with India American officials in private talks accused India of encouraging Bengali guerillas New Delhi refuted these accusations Indira Gandhi herself said that it was mischievous to suggest that India had anything to do with what happened in Bangladesh and added If we want to create trouble for Pakistan we could have done so But we do not want to do so She pinned the blame for what happened in east Bengal on Pakistan s refusal to abide by the verdict of the people

When it became clear that Pakistan would not take any steps to stop the exodus of refugees and the United States would not press Pakistan to work for a peaceful and democratic settlement in east Bengal India made prepa rations to meet the threat posed by the massive exodus of refugees Indira Gandhi summoned General Manekshaw the chief of army staff and asked him to make preparations for an armed action for the specific purpose of enabling

elements in his department The secret decision to give arms to Pakistan was believed to have been taken by President Nixon himself in June 1971 The Nixon adminis tration publicly announced in June that it intended to continue economic aid to Islamabad although the Aid Pak Consortium wanted aid to be withheld till a political solution to the conflict between the two wings of Pakistan was found

The United States gave Pakistan not only guns and gold but also the know how to put down the Bengali guerillas Dr Herbert Rees the Director of USAID conceded in July 1971 that Robert Jackson a police expert who was withdrawn from Dacca following the crack down on the Bengalis by the Pakistani troops on March 25 had returned to Dacca Jackson had been working for USAID since 1964 in police training programmes in Vietnam and Brazil where Washington had helped unde mocratic regimes sympathetic to it to oppose revolutionary movements In Operation Phoenix conducted by Jackson in Vietnam communists and communist sympathisers had been quietly assassinated Jackson set up training camps in Dacca where *razakars* were given three week training in anti guerilla activities The *New York Times* quoted U S Congressional sources as having said that there was evidence that a plan is being drawn up to have U S teams to help the Pakistan army to suppress Bengali resistance in east Bengal [8]

Encouraged by the support received from the United States and China Pakistan inducted more troops into east Bengal in a determined bid to crush the Bengali resistance out of existence The navy was strengthened so that the waterways in east Bengal could be controlled and the countryside made safe for the Pakistan army to carry on its operations against the guerillas Pakistan purchased three coastal vessels from China and chartered seventeen from the United States with the ostensible purpose of moving foodgrains to east Bengal But these vessels were

8 July 23 1971

used to transport men and arms as well The bulk of the $10 million grant the United States gave Pakistan in October 1971 for humanitarian purposes was used by Islamabad to build military fortifications on the east Bengal border The U S Senate later confirmed the reports that the general accounting office of the U S Congress had drawn the attention of a Senate sub-committee to this misuse of U S aid On July 5 250 Chinese army personnel including engineers arrived in east Bengal to help the martial law administration to restore communications and train Pakistani soldiers in anti guerilla warfare With all the know how and the arms Pakistan received from the United State and China it took her four months to blunt the armed resistance in east Bengal and establish a semblance of control over towns and partial control over the rest of east Bengal The Bengali resistance movement however did not die out It went underground and moved across the borders of east Pakistan into India

While the pro Pakistani elements in Washington were helping Islamabad to put the blame for the crisis on India U S officials in Dacca and Islamabad were worried over the lack of realism of their bosses The majority of the staff of the U S consulate general in Dacca complained to Washington that by accepting the bloodshed and repres sion in east Bengal and doing business as usual with Islamabad Washington had tarnished its image in Asia The U S State Department sent a senior diplomat to Dacca to quieten the U S officials there Even the U S embassy in Islamabad in a confidential cable to Rogers said on July 15 that U S officials in Pakistan were taking a hard line with the Government of Pakistan and the Govern ment of east Pakistan in an attempt to get them to face up dealing with the possibility of famine The cable told the State Department that its public statements inconsis- tent with this line are likely to impair the effectiveness of our representation here But Washington did not allow its policies to be dictated by its consular staff

By the end of June India gave up all hopes of a peace ful settlement of the east Bengal issue India s attitude

hardened and as Indira Gandhi said on June 23 New Delhi was concerned only with India s interests and could not care less if our decisions alienate any other India still groped for a credible policy which would en able her to stop the inflow of millions of refugees and send them back New Delhi sympathised with the freedom movement in east Bengal but its attitude towards the Awami League the provisional government of Bangladesh and the Bengali guerillas operating from Indian soil lacked clarity In the early months of the revolt India had str pped the guerillas of all heavy arms and discouraged them from operating from India Some leaders of the Awami League feared that India was in favour of a politi cal settlement within the framework of a united Pakistan An editorial in *Joy Bangla* the mouthpiece of the Awami League said that if in the name of political settlement attempts were made to tag Bangladesh to west Pakistan there would be no solidarity political economic or social

After the Pakistanis put down the rebels in the towns and set up forward posts close to the Indian border India s options narrowed She found that the world community would not be of any help in solving her problems and lightening her burden by sending back the refugees In an aide memoire to India and Pakistan on July 19 U N secretary general U Thant suggested that th refugees might be repatriated by establishing a limit ed representation of the High Commission for Refugees on both sides of the border He said that before attempt ing to make this arrangement on a large scale it might be tried in a limited way in two or three selected areas His suggestion had the whole hearted support of Washing ton but India rejected it because she thou ht the proposal was unrealistic and equated India and Pakistan

Even when the United Nations gave up the proposal Washington did not It persuaded Pakistan and the United Nations to station a U N group of 156 relief and rehabilitation experts including seventy three monitors in east Bengal The cost of the operation was estimated

to be about $4 million and Washington volunteered to contribute $1 million as initial payment to help the group to organise and fly the necessary equipment to east Bengal We cannot conceal our enthusiasm that this has been made possible said a U S official who described it as the only ray of sunshine in an otherwise damned gloomy situation A handful of U N monitors ultimately went to east Bengal but most of them were stationed in Dacca The U S exercise in rushing U N observers showed that Washington was eager to show that India was not willing to co-operate It was also a part of the larger exercise to bail out Yahya Khan and bring in the United Nations in some form or the other to restore peaceful conditions But neither Islamabad nor Washington had given any serious thought to the problem of the return of the refugees and they appeared to be prepared to let these millions of refugees stay on in India and be looked after by India

Kissinger s visit to India and Pakistan in July 1971 marked a clear change in the American attitude towards the east Bengal crisis Although it was suggested to him that he should visit the refugee camps so that he could get a better idea of the magnitude of the crisis he did not go to the refugee camps He did not want to offend Pakistan When he was in New Delhi Indira Gandhi told him of the importance of seeking an early political settlement He was vague in his replies but he was very pleasant and gave the impression that on his return he would work for a political settlement When he visited Islamabad Yahya Khan placed before him evidence of India s hostile intentions and involvement in the guerilla warfare in east Bengal Kissinger asked Yahya Khan to be realistic and not increase the tension by repressive methods He suggested the replacement of a substantial number of Pakistani soldiers in east Bengal by U N peace keeping forces so that the escalation of tension in the sub continent could be halted Pakistan agreed to have U N observers provided India also would have them on her side of the border Washington was more concerned with

establishing law and order in east Bengal than in bringing about a political settlement or creating conditions for the return of the refugees

At that time China was not involved in the developments in east Bengal except for giving token aid to Pakistan Klaus Mehnert the German expert on China and the Soviet Union visited China a few months prior to Kissinger s visit and had a meeting with Chou En lai Mehnert told this writer that at no tim did anyone in China mention the east Bengal crisis After Kissinger s visit to Peking the United States and China agreed to keep Yahya Khan in power help him to retain east Bengal and defeat India s moves to send back the refugees India became an adversary of not only Pakistan and China but also of official Washington

After Kissinger s return from Peking the U S commitment to Pakistan became well-defined A review of U S policy in south Asia undertaken by the White House in the light of Kissinger s report served to harden the U S decision to support Yahya Khan Before Kissinger went to Islamabad Washington had appeared to be anxious to promote a political settlement that would restore peace in east Bengal Washington had hoped that Pakistan would reopen negotiations that were broken off on March 25 and reach a settlement with the Awami League After Kissinger s return from Islamabad and Peking the U S attitude towards Pakistan became more friendly

The Washington Special Action Group (WSAG) of the U S national security council meeting under Kissinger s chairmanship noted with resentment that India had not agreed to the stationing of U N observers on her border It recorded that if India intervened in east Bengal New Delhi should be made to pay for it The WSAG also d cided not to cut off aid to Pakistan although to its discomfiture a few days later the U S House of Representatives suspended all military economic and other assistance to Pakistan This decision wa influenced by the wide coverage in U S newspapers of Paki tani atrocities and editorial criticism of American support to Islamabad Some Ameri

can newspapers said that Washington was fanning the flames of war and was responsible for the carnage The *Washington Post* wrote that more than the Soviet Union and China the United States was to be blamed for the tragedy in east Bengal It said that for strategic reasons which came down to no more than the outmoded habit of military alliance with Pakistan the United States had kept up a flow of arms and had asked Congress for new economic aid—all this under the pretext of gaining a friend s leverage in order to steer Pakistan to a moderate course 9

Americans are more sensitive than most other peoples about stories of murder and repression of individual freedom U S public opinion was by and large shocked by the stories of Pakistani atrocities which appeared in the U S Press Americans watched with horror the graphic television accounts of west Pakistan s campaign of terror Tony Clifton of *Newsweek* reported I have seen babi s shot men with their backs whipped raw I have seen people literally struck dumb by the horror of seeking their children murdered their daughters dragged off into sexual slavery Sydney Schanberg the New Delhi correspondent of the *New York Times* said that the army had killed students intellectuals professors, engineers and doctors even when they were not directly involved with the national movement

But neither the newspaper reports and editorials nor the advice of U S diplomats in south Asia made any difference to official Washington which continued to give full support to Pakistan In fact Washington s attitude became more partisan and it blamed its own consular officials who suggested that the United States should remain neutral Archer Blood the U S consul general in Dacca sent a petition to Washington against the U S failure to restrain Pakistani aggression Tikka Khan the martial law administrator of east Bengal objected to Blood s attitude and asked Washington to recall him Blood was not only recalled but was dubbed an alarmist.

9 August 1 1971

He was relegated to a desk in the personnel section of State Department though he still had eighteen months *of his tenure of duty in Dacca*

The U S attitude on east Bengal was finally settled August 4 1971 when Nixon conferred with William Rog and Kissinger[10] At thi meeting Nixon and his ai decided to give all help to Pakistan and put pressure Yahya Khan to normalise conditions in east Bengal *new policy involved assistance to Pakistan to improve* law and order situation in east Bengal and bring ab economic regeneration of the area As Yahya Khan firmly against the release of Mujibur Rehman Washi ton decided to drop the demand for his release *Paki Times reflecting the views of the military regime in Isla* bad had earlier criticised Washington for demand Mujib s release and asked Don t they like the judi process ? Washington decided to side step Mujib and w for a peaceful settlement with the east Bengali leaders had taken refuge in India

A day after the high power pow wow at a press c ference summoned at short notice Nixon indicated that stood by Pakistan He said We are not going to courage any public pressure on the Government of Pakistan That would be counter productive These *matters we will discuss only in private channels* opposed the suspension of aid to Pakistan by the House Representatives and said the stoppage would aggravate refugee problem He asked Rogers to meet U Thant discuss the situation and see how best Washington co *help the United Nations to help Pakistan Washing* succeeded in forcing out of Pakistan some minor c cessions such as the replacement of General Tikka K by Dr Malik a civilian But on major issues particul the release of Mujibur Rehman and the political settlem

10 It is presumed that the White House had adva information about India s decision to enter into a tr with the Soviet Union and that this matter came for discussion at the meeting

massacres in east Bengal and the sorrow over the sad plight of the refugees in India were shared by many countries Even in the United States public opinion was against Islamabad s repressive policies

The Soviet Union was one of the few countries which did not stop with merely expressing horror over the happenings in east Bengal but also supported India s stand It was natural therefore that India moved closer to the Soviet Union and entered into a treaty with it Pakistan s reaction to the treaty signed in August 1971 was one of intransigence Yahya Khan accused India of continued shelling of the border and threatened India with dire con sequences The treaty upset Washington also A few days after the treaty was signed a White House spokesman said that Nixon would not like to make any further moves to get Mujibur Rehman released Peking s reaction to the Indo Soviet treaty was conditioned by its suspicion of Moscow It accused India of ganging up with Moscow against China

Not only Washington Peking and Islamabad but also a section of the east Bengal leaders in India viewed the treaty with suspicion India s close ties with the Soviet Union were not liked by some elements in the Awami League There were doubts in the minds of some leaders of the provisional government of Bangladesh about India s ultimate objectives To forestall a move to form a rival provisional government which could possibly become inimical to India New Delhi gave greater assistance to the provisional government of Bangladesh with its unofficial headquarters in Calcutta India was aware of the U S efforts to influence some members of the provisional government to seek a settlement with Yahya Khan In August and September U S officials and some Indians acting on their behalf made ecret contacts with influential members of the Awami League and put forward proposals for solving the east Bengal crisis The United States offered the provisional government assistance including the grant of a large sum of money for the rehabilitation of refugees The *quid pro quo* was a settlement with Pakistan on the

basis of some sort of a loose federation—even a very loose federation

There was a possibility that some of the pro American elements in the provisional government particularly in the Awami League might succumb to these pressures and work against the interests of India The U S propaganda among the conservative and none too secular section of the east Bengal leaders was that India was in the Soviet camp and that it was dangerous for the east Bengalis to put their faith in India if they valued their independence and religion A senior member of the provisional government of Bangla desh lamented about his government s unequal relations with India 'There is little we can do We have to comply because we are in exile and have to depend on India for both moral and material support We are grateful for this help but we do not like the new trend We are a sovereign government and we resent any efforts to attach strings to aid 12

India was worried over the U S moves to gain influence among the east Bengal leaders She could not afford to let the United States shape the policies of the provisional government of Bangladesh To counter these moves and safeguard India s own interests New Delhi persuaded the provisional government to alter the composition of some of the committees of the liberation front In August and September D P Dhar visited Calcutta to explain India s stand and assist the provisional government to formulate its policies In August he had seven meetings in forty eight hours with Bangladesh leaders to straighten out policies A few months earlier radical leaders of the Awami League had accused India of wanting a settlement within the framework of a united Pakistan Now there was suspicion in New Delhi that some of the leaders would succumb to U S pressures and would be prepared to com promise on the question of complete independence for east Bengal Dhar however said he found no support for the move for a compromise in the top echelons of the provi

12. *The Times* London October 7 1971

sional government of the Awami League

When the provisional government decided to send an east Bengal mission to New York to canvass support at the United Nations and announced that Moshtaque Ahmed the foreign minister of the provisional government would lead the mission New Delhi thought that the composition of the mission should be changed It convinced the leaders that the foreign minister should stay behind to meet any new crisis that might develop in east Bengal and persuaded them to include Professor Muzaffar Ahmed also in the mission New Delhi also persuaded the Awami League to broadbase the consultative committee of the liberation front by giving representation to all shades of political opinion In September the consultative committee was reorganised to include four members of the Awami League three communists and an independent politician

India kept a close watch on the diplomatic moves by the United States and repudiated the propaganda that she followed the Soviet line On September 1 Indira Gandhi declared We will not allow ourselves to be led away either by the anti Soviet hysteria or by the anti American hysteria She said India would judge every issue independently but admitted that her stand was far from idealistic. Keeping in mind the U S attitude towards India she conceded that other countries did not always think that India was in the right India was following a hard headed practical path open to any country which wanted to keep its independence

In October New Delhi received the report that Pakistan had evacuated civilian population along the border in the west and an unknown number of armoured and infantry divisions had moved up to the borders adjoining Kashmir Rajasthan and the Punjab Pakistan had by then deployed eight of her fifteen divisions in the west and five in the east India informed the United Nations of the Pakistani troops movement and said Pakistan should not be allowed to bring her forces into the forward areas. After inquiries U N observers told New Delhi that Pakistanis were only carrying out military exercises and

would withdraw after ten days When the Pakistani forces did not withdraw after ten days India moved her troops to the western border and prepared herself to meet the threat of war New Delhi had all along suspected that with the increasing success of the guerilla operations in east Bengal Pakistan would attack in the west in order to internationalise her internal problem India was therefore prepared for a war from as early as July 1971 The plans were ready When the Political Affairs Committee of the cabinet met on October 15 and 16 the final clearance to act in the event of enemy aggression was given to the armed forces In October a top military official said Why should we fight shy of acknowledging that we are fully prepared to hit back if the Pakistanis are foolish enough to hit us ? 13

Yahya Khan had misgivings about the outcome of a war with India for he knew that his armed forces were not a match against India s He was also worried about the inefficiency of his political aides Reflecting his opinion *Pakistan Times* said on October 7 Persons whose duty it is to acquaint the world with the true state of affairs remained busy even in this crisis in grades and promotions On October 13 Yahya Khan wrote a personal letter to Kissinger to request him to play a peace-maker s role He asked Kissinger to request Nixon to give personal attention to the deteriorating situation in south Asia and take steps to improve it After this urgent personal appeal Washington made contacts with the Bangladesh leaders again in Calcutta and urged them to negotiate with Pakistan It also asked Pakistan to take a positive and conciliatory stand Through diplomatic channels the United States consulted the Soviet Union Britain and France in a search for a new diplomatic initiative The U S State Department appealed to India and Pakistan to exercise restraint and pull back the forces from the borders New Delhi disliked the U S State Department s move which equated India and Pakistan and thought as

13 *The Times of India* October 17 1971.

an influential American newspaper said that the appeal by Washington was rendered grotesque by the twin facts that on the one side Pakistan was almost undoubtedly responsible for the threat to peace and the United States was a partisan of that side[14]

The United States continued to press India through neutral sources to defuse the situation and not intervene in east Bengal In the course of an interview on October 19 Indira Gandhi showed her resentment of the US attitude and said that everybody admired India s restraint and gave verbal praise but the other side which was not restrained got armed support We are only concerned because of the atrocities and the fact that 13 per cent of the population of Bangladesh is now on Indian soil

The success of the *Mukti Bahini* the east Bengali guerilla organisation in liberating parts of east Bengal forced Yahya Khan much against his wish to decide in favour of military offensive in the west He hoped that a swift military occupation of parts of Kashmir would help the United States and China to force the United Nations to intervene He also hoped that such a course would enable him to insist on a package deal under which India would be barred from helping Bengali guerillas and Pakistan would agree to a ceasefire in the west

While the preparation for waging war was stepped up in both the countries the activity on the diplomatic front was also intensified India s main diplomatic thrust was to brand Pakistan as the aggressor and request other countries to put pressure on Yahya Khan to release Mujibur Rehman and come to terms with him so that a representative government could be set up in east Bengal and the refugees could return to their homes in safety India insisted that the first step should be the release of Mujibur Rehman who after trial by a military court was under sentence of death Pakistani missions in the major capitals of the world had been informed of the recommendation of the military court a week in advance and

14 *The Washington Post* October 29 1971

were advised to prepare the ground for defending any action Islamabad might take In October India put pressure on many countries to ask Pakistan to release him. The Soviet Union in a firm note to Pakistan warned that the execution of Mujibur Rehman would create a dangerous situation and asked Pakistan to withdraw the troops from the border Islamabad was silent about Mujibur Rehman but told Moscow that it would withdraw its forces from the border if India withdrew hers and ceased infiltration and other hostile acts Some other countries also including Britain France and Yugoslavia asked Yahya Khan not to carry out the sentence of death The United States also urged Yahya Khan to spare Mujibur Rehman s life It was reported that after a long drinking session at Yahya Khan s house American ambassador Farland a close friend of the President extracted from him the promise that Mujib would not be hanged The execution was finally suspended as result of the pressure put on Pakistan by many countries including the United States

New Delhi s firm reaction to Yahya Khan s aggressive speeches and actions and the war preparations in India worried Islamabad which made a fresh appeal to the United Nations to intervene Yahya Khan requested U Thant to visit the sub-continent and asked him for his personal intercession proposing the stationing of U N observers on both sides of the border between India and Pakistan and mutual withdrawal of forces to peace time positions He did not suggest any steps that would lead to a peaceful political settlement in east Bengal The purpose of his appeal to U Thant was to internationalise the crisis in the sub continent and forestall any action India might take to send back the refugees

Meanwhile the influx of refugees continued unabated and the burden of looking after about ten million of them proved too heavy for India As the international community failed to take effective steps that would enable the refugees to return India decided to take unilateral action But before doing so Indira Gandhi wanted to explain per-

sonally the realities of the situation to the leaders of western countries and request them to restrain Paki tan from taking further aggressive action

She knew that the White House was unsympathetic and that India evoked more commiseration than admiration in Washington She knew too that American officials had accused her of stirring up anti American feelings in south Asia and of aiding and abetting the Bengali freedom fighters in their efforts to dismember Pakistan She did *not hide her resentment against the U S attitude* In a rather forthright pre-emptive statement at a luncheon in her honour by the foreign press association of London a day prior to her arrival in the United States on November 1 she said that Washington was taking a rather short term view of the Bangladesh problem but added that this was perhaps because the United States was far away from the scene She also expressed her unhappiness over the indif ference of other nations which forced India to live with this horror from day to day this exodus of millions of helpless people She wanted the world to know that India would not tolerate the influx of hundreds of thousands of refugees We will not tolerate them People (in India) have been saying How long can you stand it ? That date is long since past I feel I am sitting on the top of a volcano

She went to the United States to inform Nixon of the grave situation in south Asia and find out what he would do if the volcano erupted to what extent he was committed to help Pakistan She also wanted to warn Washington *that if no solution were found in a few weeks the volcano* was bound to erupt She told Nixon that she had gone there in the hope that the United States would have a deeper understanding of the situation in our part of the world that Nixon would change his attitude and perhaps out of a wise impulse as history tells us work to save people from despair She further told him that Indians had a great admiration for the spirit of quest of the American people for their desire to reach beyond the immediate Nixon s welcome to the Prime Minister of

the world s largest free nation and the world s largest democracy was not warm not cold He spoke of the closeness between the two countries a closeness knit together by a higher morality a more profound morality that did not require any legal document—like the treaty the U S had with Pakistan or the Soviet Union with India

During their discussions lasting three hours and fifteen minutes spread over two days Nixon and Indira Gandhi made a sustained effort to understand each other s points of view She did not doubt his desire to find a solution but she saw that he was unable to shed his set notions about India and Pakistan She said I think the President knows what we think in India and I have a better appreciation of his views He requested her to exercise restraint and allow the United States to complete the round of negotiations it had set in motion b tween Islamabad and east Bengal leaders He wanted her in the meantime to pull back the Indian troops from the borders and as ured her that Pakistan would be persuaded to pull back hers She told Nixon that she did not know how Indians who were the victims of the influx of the refugees from Pakistan could be equated with those whose activities had caused the influx and the consequent crisis

Nixon indicated to her that the United States would cut off military aid to Pakistan[15] and asked India to be patient for a couple of months Kissinger had earlier in October 1971 told Indian leaders that the United States wanted at least a year s cooling off period during which India should stop supporting the guerillas Washington s anxiety was that there should be no major conflict in south Asia which might

15 A spokesman of the U S State Department said that the reason for cutting off aid was that we agreed with the Government of Pakistan that there would be no useful purpose served by continued shipments It appeared from this statement that the stoppage had no connection with the east Bengal crisis nor with the assurance given by Nixon to Indira Gandhi

affect Nixon s visit to China or his chances in the presidential election in 1972 His preoccupation his near obsession with elections many of which he had lost was evident in a remark he made when Indira Gandhi was in Washington A great virtue he saw in her was her record of success at the polls At the banquet he gave her in Washington he said the Indian Prime Minister had never lost an election and that is something

The wise impulse the Prime Minister had looked for in Washington did not materialise Her visit was however not without its benefits to India and to her India received unexpected support from many U S quarters Even the *Time* magazine a consistent critic of India said that Indira Gandhi s handsome bearing forthright manner and ranking as the Prime Minister of the world s largest democracy had won her new friends in Washington and new support If the volcano still explodes no one can say she has not tried

When Indira Gandhi returned to India on November 13 she informed some of her cabinet colleagues that she believed the United States did not want to get involved in an India Pakistan war She gave the impression that before making any moves India would await the outcome of the new diplomatic efforts by some of the countries she had visited She told her colleagues that the world leaders should be given a week or two to persuade Pakistan to initiate steps to reach a realistic political solution in the east She also said that if the world leaders failed to provide a solution India would be justified in taking steps to resolve the crisis and send back the refugees

Less than a fortnight after her return Washington applied the screw on New Delhi Economic aid to India was cut off on the excuse that U.S public opinion which had become impatient over India s refusal to defuse the situation had to be assuaged The suspension of licences for arms to India and later the stoppage of economic aid were sanctioned by Nixon himself The cancellation of aid was a minor irritant but what India resented more was the political complexion given to the action and the suggestion

that the United States was punishing India for not taking its advice

Washington s punitive action far from deflecting India from her policy of total support to the east Bengal guerillas strengthened her resolve to liberate east Bengal India stepped up her support to the freedom fighters and Indian forces entered east Bengal to back them against Pakistani attacks New Delhi acknowledged that it had authorised its forces to enter east Bengal to thwart the Pakistani offensive against the freedom fighters It was not possible for India to let down the guerillas and allow them to be over powered and driven to India Nor was it possible to keep her forces idle on the border when Pakistanis were shelling into their positions from across the border After Pakistani air force planes had intruded into India and were shot down in the third week of November and after Yahya Khan had declared that he would himself go to the front to fight the war with India New Delhi did not exercise any restraint in hitting the Pakistani armed forces along the eastern border

As the war fever mounted in the east India informed the United Nations in the third week of November that Pakistan s aggressive actions threatened our national life and posed a serious threat to our security A week later Pakistan invited the attention of the United Nations to the dangerous situation in the sub-continent and to the unprovoked and large scale attacks on Pakistan territory by Indian armed forces Islamabad gave up its demand for posting U N observers in both India and Pakistan and requested that the observers be posted at least on the Pakistan side of the border to observe and report on border violations by India

Pakistan knew that any prolonged war with India could be ruinous Yahya Khan himself had said that to attack India would be military lunacy In a desperate exercise to get positive support and public commitment from China he sent to Peking a high powered delegation led by Bhutto Pakistan asked Peking to give her Chinese built fighter planes and increased war supplies China is believed to have told Pakistan to act with restraint and work for a political

solution Pakistan won a de laration of support from China but failed to obtain any spe ifi assurance of Chinese action in the event of war

The newspapers in Pakistan began playi g un the size of India s armed strength and said that Pakistan was ou numbered by India at sea by 7 to 1 on land by 5 to 1 and in the air by 3 to 1 Yahya Khan s advisers however convinced the President that a lightning campaign in the west particularly in the Punjab and Kashmir would be able to stop India s intervention in east Bengal Internationlise the conflict divert the attention of the world from the crisis in the east Bengal bring the United Nations into the picture and ensure an honourable peace that would save him and his Government His advisers had prepared a plan to attack India in the second week of November but it is believed that Pakistan did not strike during this period when Indira Gandhi was abroad in deference to Washing ton s specific request

On November 22 Pakistan announced that India had launched an all-out offensive against east Pakistan and al leged that India had a tacked at Jessore Sylhet and Chit tagong India denied that she had launched any offensive and described the Pakistani reports as false Peter Hazel hurst reported in the *Times* London on November 24

In what appears to be the beginning of an undeclared war Indian troops disguised as Bengali guerillas have moved into east Pakistan in brigade strength and have occupied a slice of territory near the Pakistan garrison town of Jessore

Yahya Khan was under pressure from his generals to attack India in the west He hesitated But Pakistan was propelled towards war by the momentum of her own activities and started the regular phase of the war with attacks on eight airfields in northern and western India on the evening of December 3 and by ground attack in Kashmir

4

THE FOURTEEN DAY WAR

AFTER the Pakistani jets attacked Indian airfields and the army invaded Indian territory Nixon expressed warm approval of Islamabad s efforts to solve the Bangladesh issue by peaceful means and accused India of frustrating all efforts to find a settlement Washington stopped the committed economic assistance to India It encouraged third parties to send warplanes to Pakistan It declared India as the aggressor It sent the *Enterprise* to the Indian ocean to torment India These were hostile acts to which no self respecting nation could react without bitterness India had enough justification to break off diplomatic relations with the United States But India reacted with caution—with surprise and anger not hatred and pique She recognised that the United States was a mighty power and she could not wish away its influence from south Asia She also knew that the people of the United States were not solidly behind Washington s hostile moves for never before had the U S press been so criti cal of Washington s attitude towards India as in 1971 India nevertheless adopted a stiff attitude towards official Washington which she thought was acting in a purely partisan manner

When the war began on December 3 1971 President Nixon granted an urgent request from Pakistan for substan tial quantities of military aid Washington had allowed

clandestine export of sizable quantities of military hardware to Pakistan even before the war broke out Some of these deliveries were detected by India One of them was made by a C-141 cargo plane which unloaded arms in Karachi at 10 30 P M on November 29 three days before the war started Ambassador Kenneth Keating in a communication to the State Department said later that if the information was true it was in direct violation of our publicly announced policy A month later Washington admitted the landing of the plane but denied that it unloaded military hardware and said that the aircraft on the date in question disembarked eight persons returning from recreational leave and unloaded personal luggage and embassy mail

India was not surprised at the material and moral support Washington gave Pakistan What surprised her was its effort to make the world believe that India had frustrated its efforts for a peaceful s ttlement and that she was the aggres,or The State Department claimed that Washington had made over a hundred contacts with India and eight contacts with Bangladesh representatives to work out a political settlement The meetings which U S senators had with ambassador Keating in New Delhi and all the inconsequential meetings at lower levels at the India desk at Washington were taken count of to bring the total to a hundred The State Department never disclosed the numb r of times it had contacted Pakistan Washington wanted to paint India as an unreasonable and recalcitrant nation and absolve Pakistan of the responsibility for the war It claimed that it had persuaded Pakistan to make concessions that Yahya Khan had agreed to talk to Bangladesh representatives and that he was ready to grant east Pakistan autonomy in everything except defence currency and foreign policy It further stated that while a time table for establishing autonomy in east Bengal was under discussion in Islamabad India without waiting and without giving any indication of her military time table struck on November 22 Throughout the eight months of misery and tension in south Asia

Washington had publicly supported Pakistan on the ostensible ground that it could apply more effective pressure in private It had clung to the belief that India would not invade east Bengal and free the country from Pakistani occupation With its weak economy and with the burden of a million refugees how could India go to war ?

India s boldness in resorting to war to settle the issue upset Washington s calculations It angered Nixon He was angry with India because he believed she had started the war He had made the announcement of his trip to China a few days before the war broke out and could not tolerate in an area close to China a war that might create uncertainties over his visit to Peking He was also angry with New Delhi because it had rejected the U S advice to wait a little while longer till Washington could persuade Pakistan to come to a settlement in Bangladesh—till he returned from Peking If India had waited for Washington s convenience the burden of looking after the refuge s would have disorganised her economy and she would have faced a graver military challenge from Pakistan

Soon after Pakistan s air attacks on Indian airfields Nixon made an early morning telephone call to Kissinger and asked him to review the crisis in south Asia He told Kissinger to take a tough attitude towards India and examine the implications of stoppage of economic aid to India Within four hours of the Pakistani air attacks Kissinger called a meeting of the WSAG to review the reports of military action in west Pakistan and decide on U S moves He told the group that the President had said to him that Washington was not being tough enough towards India and that he wanted a tilt in favour of Pakistan The eagerness of the White House to put India in the wrong was evident when Kissinger asked the mem bers of the group whether it was possible that India had attacked first and the Paks simply did what they could before dark (sunset) in response

After its failure to avert the war the White House asked the Pakistan ambassador to take the issue to the U N security council so as to internationalise the crisis

William Rogers called the Pakistani ambassador for a lengthy conference on December 4 but did not contact the Indian ambassador to hear his version Acting under Nixon s instructions Washington suspended a little over a third of the U S economic aid to India on the ground that such help might be used by New Delhi to carry on the war with Pakistan U S officials argued that the purpose of giving economic assistance was to support dev lopment efforts and this objective could not be secured by giving aid to India when she was at war A similar suspension of general economic aid to Pakistan was not made on the ground that the aid to Pakistan was ear marked for humanitarian relief in east Bengal in the form of fertilisers for the next rice crop American officials did not take into account that agricul tural operations in most of east Bengal had come to a halt and that funds earmarked for fertilisers could be convert ed into gun powder

Washington did not hide the fact that it wanted Pakistan to win the war but even Washington had its limitations and reservations about openly helping the Pakistani war effort Since it could not fly out warplanes which Pakistan urgently needed it encouraged Jordon and Libya to send U S planes to Pakistan The Indian ambas sador to Egypt revealed later in a talk that he had made frequent visits to Tripoli to persuade Libya not to send the planes to Pakistan When the Kissinger group consid ered the offer of King Hussain of Jordon to transfer American built F 104 planes to Pakistan a State Department official cautioned the group against the transfer Kissinger himself expres ed doubts as to whether the United States had the right to authorise the transfer But the request was kept pending On December 9 in a special message the State Department asked Dean Brown the U S ambassador to Jordon to tell the king that the United States appreci ated his readiness to send planes to Pakistan and that the whole subject remains under intensive review at a very high level of the USG

The transcript of the discuss ons by the Kissinger

group made public by US columnist Jack Anderson does not reveal whether Washington finally permitted the transfer of the planes But a report in the *New York Times* from Islamabad on March 30 1972 said that Pakistan military sources disclosed that the air forces of Jordon and Libya had provided American built combat planes to Pakistan during the war and that some of them continued to remain in Pakistan in March three months after the ceasefire Jordon had sent American built F 104s and Libya Northrup F 5 jets The day after the news of the Arab assistance to Pakistan war was published Washington put out a report[1] that western diplomatic sources believed that the Soviet Union had transferred some of its war planes from Egypt to India in December to replace Indian Air force losses during the India Pakistan war This report struck a neat balance and gave an ostensible justification for the supply of American planes to Pakistan

Washington did its best to assist Pakistan and encourage her to carry on the war President Nixon himself expressed warm appreciation of Yahya Khan s effort on the diplomatic front On December 6 1971 a day after Washington finalised its plans to announce suspension of aid to India and considered various forms of assistance to Pakistani war effort President Nixon received the credentials of the new Pakistan ambassador General Agha Mohammad Raza in what turned out to be an unusual ceremony The President told the ambassador that he had followed with sympathetic interest the efforts of the Government of Pakistan to achieve an amicable settlement in east Pakistan He added that he welcomed the efforts of President Yahya Khan to reduce the tension in the sub-continent After the presentation of credentials Nixon invited the ambassador his wife and daughter to join him in a group photograph. Give them (the photographers) our best smiles he told the ambassador and his family While the Pakistani faces remained glum and serious Nixon s face was wreathed in smile The whole

1 *The New York Times* April 1 1972

exercise was meant to assure Pakistanis that the White House was with them in their war against India

The presidential smile for the Pakistanis notwith stading influential sections of American public were unconvinced about the fairness of Washington s stand In the United States there was anger and resentment in many quarters Some of them believed that Washington had side-stepped the central issue and had responded with flagrant injustice in attempting to pin on India the major responsibility for the conflict The severe criticism by the U S Press and congressional leaders angered and emb arrassed the Nixon administration but it did not prevent the White House from getting further involved in the war On December 7 Washington charged that India had launched a full scale wat in total disregard of the progress in American efforts to start negotiations between Pakistan and Bangladesh The White House condemned India s use of the armed foces as unjustified and as a move that could lead to international chaos Kissinger told a visiting British statesman that he regarded India s invasion of east Bengal in the same light as Hitler s occupation of the Rhine[2] Nonetheless the White House denied that it was anti Indian!

The U S efforts in the United Nations to brand India as the aggressor were frustrated by the Soviet Union Nixon said that he regretted the failure of the Soviet Union to join the vast majority of the membership of the United Nations who called for an immediate ceasefire and with drawal of forces India s reaction to the U S move to put her in the dock was one of sullen resentment Even the traditional Indian friends of the United States were bewil dered India s attitude to the U S moves was summed up by Swaran Singh when he said in the United Nations that he would refrain from asking the U S representative questions about the intentions of the United States in other parts of the world thousands of miles away where U S troops had been engaged for years in bloody conflicts

2. Peter Jay *The Times* London January 1 1972

which had not been brought to the security coun il and where appeals had been resisted and withdrawal of foreign troops withheld

New Delhi stated that it would be glad to consider any proposal for a ceasefire and mutual withdrawal in the wake of a political settlement acceptable to the elected represen tatives of east Bengal Indira Gandhi referred to the U S actions and said that India would not be cowed down She accused the United States of being hypocritical and of not daring to take a public position that while Pakistan s integrity was certainly sacrosanct human rights liberty were no less so and that there was a necessary intercon nection between the inviolability of States and the content ment of their people She resented the U S insinuation that India had precipitated the crisis Both the United States and China working in harmony and with the enthu siasm of a new friendship made bluff manoeuvres against India s land and sea frontiers The U S and China found themselves virtually co belligerents when they backed Pakistan 3 As the fighting in east Bengal went against Pakistan and Yahya Khan s troops were driven to the wall both Washington and Peking asked India on December 10 to have an immediate ceasefire On the same day Nixon administration instructed Turkish pilots in Libya to be ready to fly American jet planes to Pakistan

When it became obvious that Indian troops would take Dacca the attitude of the White House stiffened On December 12 Washington again asked the U N security council to demand a ceasefire and withdrawal of Indian troops from Pakistan A White House statement said that with east Pakistan virtually occupied by Indian troops the continuation of the war would assume the character of an armed attack on the existence of a member of the United Nations It accused India of defying world opinion India remained cool She neither rejected nor acted on the gene ral assembly s proposals Indira Gandhi said that she had not made up her mind about the resolution

3 C L. Sulzberger *The New York Times* February 2 1972

Washington knew that Pakistan had no chance of winning an offensive war against India But it had hoped that Pakistan s fighting ability and reported man to-man superiority would thwart an Indian offensive It had been assured by Islamabad that if India attacked in the east Pakistan would give a crippling blow to the Indian air force make a sharp thrust into Jammu and Kashmir and occupy as large a chunk of territory as possible for future bargaining Islamabad reckoned that with India unable to counter attack for want of air support after the lightning attack by Pakistan the U N call for ceasefire would be accepted by India and this would leave east Bengal in Pakistan s hands

But the Indian air force was not crippled nor did Pakistan make any dent into the Indian defence lines in Kashmir or the Punjab Islamabad s worst miscalculation was over the ability of the Indian troops to move fast to wards Dacca Both Islamabad and Washington had hoped that Pakistani troops in Dacca would hold out long enough for rescue operations to be mounted It was when Pakistan failed to carry out her war plans and Washington s diplo matic moves failed that the White House took the last minute decision to send a task force of the Seventh Fleet into the Bay of Bengal The United States decided to move into the theatre of war without a request from either of the warring sides a though it was a party to the demand in the United Nations assembly a few days earlier that the big powers should stay out of the theatre of war

Nixon felt that the time had come for his threats and punitive economic measures to be backed by firm action The White House had granted a top secret request earlier from task force 74 of the U S Pacific Fleet to conduct war time aerial surveillance of Soviet ships On December 11 Washington received reports to the effect that China had taken weather reports along the Indian border and was making some moves A secret message from Islamabad to Washington stated that Yahya Khan had an assurance from the Chinese ambassador in Pakistan that the Chinese army would attack India within seventy two hours The

Pakistan radio announced that our allies the United States and China would help Pakistan against Indian imperialism and add d that there were Chinese troop movements both in the east and in the west. Washington re eived reports that if the Chinese massed their troops the Soviet Union might plan diversionary moves in Sinki ang and that it might also counter any move by the U S Pacific Fleet [4]

The reasons behind the appearance of the *Enterprise* in the Bay of Bengal will be debated for long There is of course the very surface explanation that the Americans were trying to establish a presence which indeed they were It may also be argued that the Seventh Fleet tried perhaps in vain to intimidate India that it tried to match a Soviet presence, or that a later Soviet presence neutralised it The chronology of it all cannot be established at the moment with any degree of accuracy nor can the events be reconstructed in certain detail But it is not possible to dismiss the cynical argument that the super powers acted in concurrence and even when they sought all the while to stymie each other there were at a multiplicity of levels collateral purposes which they shared

When Nixon ordered the task force to sail into the Bay of Bengal his intention was probably not only to brow beat India but also save east Bengal from being overrun by India—at least stop the Indian advance in the west Serious concern was expressed in New Delhi Moscow London and Paris over the U S action in sending the aircraft carrier to the area of war A secret British foreign office note is believed to have described the action as dangerous Moscow was worried and was impatient about the slow progress of the Indian military action in Bangladesh It is believed New Delhi had assured the Soviet Union that Dacca would be captured in ten days from the commencement of the offensive There was grimness and a

4 It was reported that a Soviet *Kresta* class guided missile cruiser and four escort vessels were **trailing the U.S** fleet.

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certain amount of uncertainty in New Delhi when news of the *Enterprise* steaming towards the Bay of Ben was confirmed Although New Delhi was worried ab the American action it did not show any sign of par When Jagjivan Ram the defence minister was asl whether it was true that the *Enterprise* was steaming wards the Bay of Bengal and what India would do in event of an attak by U S Phantom jets he is believed have joked We have the Gnats!

During the war Washington was silent about the d patch of the *Enterprise* Only a week after the war ended admitted that the *Enterprise* and the helicopter carr *Tripoli* with a battalion of 800 marines 7 destroyers frigates—a force of 6 000 officers and men—had moved u the Bay of Bengal The U S ships were to be used acco ing to Washington reports to evacuate Americans fr east Pakistan When the ships steamed into the Bay Bengal only seventeen Americans were in east Benga The real intention of the United States was revealed wh Jerry W Fried Heim a Pentagon spokesman said December 12 that the U S fleet also served to establish American presence there

If the United States had any hope of saving Dac from falling into Indian hands it would have land marines in Bangladesh But by the time the task for steamed up the Bay of Bengal the war was almost over a the west Pakistani garrison in Dacca was ready to surre der Washington had held up for twenty four hours t Dacca commander s request for permission to surrenc before it was conveyed to India During these crucial hou Washington weighed the possibility of a limited action U S marines The Pentagon is believed to have be against any action for its appraisals showed that even if t marines landed safely it would be impossible for them reach Dacca in the teeth of opposition from the lo population and the Indian armed forces There was feasibility of landing sufficient number of marines by he

5 *The International Herald Tribune* December 15 1971

copters in Dacca to make a difference to the course of the war The other course believed to have been considered and rejected was to let Washington warn that America would intervene in east Bengal These proposals fraught with grave consequences remained only in the minds of a few hot heads and did not get translated into action

Washington put pressure on India and the Soviet Union asking them to end the war Nixon was reported to have felt that his visit to Moscow planned for June 1972 could be endangered if the Soviet Union continued to support India The possibility of cancellation of the visit was mentioned by Kissinger to newsmen He leaked this information in a rather unsubtle attempt to bring pressure on the Soviet Union It produced no effect on Moscow Later a White House spokesman tried to soften the impact of Kissinger s remark But he said that Moscow had provided India since 1965 with over $50 million in military equipment including tanks armoured vehicles and jet aircraft and that these arms deliveries had disappointed the United States The White House said that the motive behind the Soviet Union s policy in south Asia was to humiliate China and show to the world that Peking could not prevent the emergence of Bangladesh with India s support

The precipitate surrender of A K K Niazi the Pakistani general in Dacca undermined Washington s trust in Pakistan s military strength When the civilian adviser to the governor of east Pakistan sent a letter to U Thant seeking U N intervention to achieve a ceasefire to repatriate civilian and military personnel from east to west Pakistan and to call upon the elected representatives to arrange for a peaceful formation of a government in east Pakistan the proposals were disowned by Yahya Khan on the advice of the United States [6]

Even after the war ended Washington did not give up its hostile posture towards India but found ways of hurting

6 *The New York Times* said on December 15 1971 that the United States should bear part of the blame for the failure of these proposals

India and belittling her success After the dismemberment of Pakistan it claimed credit for the survival of the residuary State of Pakistan An Associated Press despatch from Washington based on background briefing said that Nixon had pressed Soviet leaders in secret communications to use their influence to dissuade India from invading west Pakistan On December 16 after the ceasefire was declared Nixon returned to the charge of India being the aggressor and rejected Indira Gandhi s claim that if the United States had searched for a genuine peace the war could have been avoided Washington made unsuccessful attempts to order Indian troops out of east Bengal declaring that the United States insists on the withdrawal of Indian troops from conquered east Pakistan

During the Bangladesh crisis the United States suffered two diplomatic defeats The first was its failure to persuade Pakistan to reach an agreement with Bangladesh and the second its inability to avert the war between India and Pakistan It also failed to help Pakistan to retain east Bengal There was disappointment and bitterness in the United States over this disaster to American prestige and posture throughout the democratic world [7] A survey in seven capitals and in the United Nations indicated that the war had damaged the moral influence and leverage of the United States in Asia It showed that the Soviet Union had emerged with great strategic and diplomatic gain from the first major confrontation with its two big rivals China and the United States It further showed that Peking s political and psychological losses were less severe than those of Washington It also showed that India emerged with a new self confidence and became closely allied to the Soviet Union

Washington however considered that in the totality of its foreign policy its diplomatic debacle in south Asia was a minor aberration It did not attach much importance to its defeat In fact some Washington experts argued that the war had helped the United States to improve its position

7 *The New York Times* December 17 1971

in the world Apologists for the White House saw in the war not merely an India Pakistan conflict but a much wider one James Reston said that the President supported Pakistan because he saw in the subcontinent the power struggle between China and the Soviet Union He said that the war had encouraged a close relationship between Washington and Peking just before Nixon was to visit China a desirable result from the point of view of the United States[8] Nixon had feared earlier that a prolonged war in south Asia might cast a shadow on his Peking visit It turned out that the brief war was beneficial to the United States in cementing its relationship with Peking and discovering common ground The war resulted in bringing the United States and China closer and to that extent it was a desirable disaster As this writer has said earlier Nixon s determination to crush all obstacles in his race to Peking explains to a great extent the policies Washington pursued in 1971

Washington reckoned that even if it was harsh on India its ties with her would not be damaged It argued that India would need U S economic aid which it thought Moscow would be unable to give On the other hand India felt that she was no longer a servile supplicant approaching the rich nations for aid with an empty bowl in hand She informed Washington that her relations with it could be normalised only if the United States recognised her dominant position in south Asia She said that the turmoil that had engulfed the area was essentially a legacy of the big power politics from the days of John Foster Dulles Indira Gandhi wanted more realism in U S policy towards India and did not want to go out of her way to improve ties with an administration which had sought to cripple her Government and humiliate her

8 *The New York Times* December 18 1971

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THE TROUBLED PAST

INDIRA GANDHI subscribed to the view that the American policy towards India in 1971 was influenced by Nixon s desire to please China and make his visit to Peking a success In February 1972 she told C L Sulzberger of *The New York Times* I suppose your (U S) attitude towards India changed when your policy towards China changed There was perhaps a slight shift in U S attitude after Nixon decided to get close to China But the basic U S policy towards India has remained more or less the same over the p st three decades although its expression has undergone periodic changes American annoyance with India as well as India s distrust of the United States is not of recent origin and Nixon is not the first American President to back Pakistan against India

Ever since Christopher Columbus during his search for a new route to reach the fabulous wealth of India stumbl ed on America in 1492 Americans have cherished a romantic image of India—the image of an exotic land of maharajas magicians and mystics of a caste-ridden poverty stricken backward people American ignorance of India was matched by India s ignorance of the United States The image of America in the Indian mind was that of a land of crime and sex of romance and adventure of the wild west of unlimited opportunities

American contacts with India go as far back as 1785 when the American ship the *Grand Turk* sailed into Calcutta and American merchants established contacts with

the British and French commercial firms in India The United States obtained from Britain special concessions for trade with India by entering into a treaty with Britain in 1794 In 1800 twelve U S merchant ships laden with Indian goods left Calcutta for Boston American imports from India in 1794 were valued at about $3 million The import of Indian goods laid the foundation of those great fortunes which constitute the origin of the wealth of so many of the older New England fam lies [1] Merchants from Boston carried on a brisk trade with India and it was considered a distinction to have an office on the India wharf in Boston American sailors who visited India enjoyed a privileged status and were sought after by Boston girls and on Cape Cod it used to be said of a pretty well bred girl She s good enough to marry an east India Cap n ' [2] American trade with India did not pick up because the new colonies had very little goods that could be exported to India and found that paying in dollars for all imports was a severe strain The trade between the two countries did not improve even in the nineteenth c ntury India s imports from the United States in 1900 amounted to only 1 7% of the total The British succeeded in keeping American trade out of India

The United States however made a dent in India at the beginning of this century when it managed to get a foothold in a few princely States Baroda and Mysore were the first two States to invite American capital and know how Mysore had an American as its chief electrical engineer and the General Electric Company an American firm installed its machinery in the hydro-electric project in Mysore Baroda appointed an economic adviser and an educational adviser from the United States and gave weight age in appointments to government departments to

1 Emery R Johnson ed *History of Domestic and Foreign Commerce of the United States* p 336
2 Samuel Eliot Morison *The Maritime History of Massa chusetts* Houghton Mifflin Company Boston 1961 p 285

Indians educated in America U S agricultural implements came to India on the recommendation of an American missionary who became the agricultural adviser to some north Indian States The biggest American involvement in India was with the Tata Iron & Steel Company The firm imported U S machinery worth $60 million and employed a large number of American technicians

At the political level Washington took lit le interest in India because the Americans felt satisfied that in India the British were engaged in the task of civilising the people of a backward area in a distant continent and there was no need for U S intervention President Theodore Roosevelt spoke of the benefits of British rule in India at a meeting in Washington on January 18 1909 He said In India we encounter the most colossal example history affords of the uccessful administration by men of European blood of a th ckly populated region of another continent Indeed it is a greater feat than was per formed under the Roman empire [3] He added that Britain did not take even a penny out of India but spent all the revenue for the benefit of Indians President William Howard Taft Roosevelt s successor in the White House said that when he thought of what Britain had done in India for the happiness of the millions in India torn by internecine strife disrupted with constant wars unable to continue agriculture or the arts of peace with inferior roads tyranny and oppression when he thought of what the British Government is now doing for these alien races the debt the world owes to England ought to be acknowledged in no grudging manner

The presence of a few hundred Indians who settled on the American west coast[4] around 1900 did not help the

3 *The New York Times* January 19 1909 (quoted by Satish Kumar Arora in *American Foreign Policy in India* 1964)

4 The first Indian emigrant went to the United States in 1899 In 1907 there were about 1 100 Indian emi grants most of whom went from Canada

United States to change its opinion of India These Indians mostly agricultural workers from the Punjab were a sad lot.

Their way of life did not inspire respect Furthermore another set of Indians also mostly from the Punjab were engaged in revolutionary activities which the U S adminis tration frowned upon A group of revolutionaries carried on an agitation to improve the living conditions of Indians in Oregon in the United States As early as 1910 in California there was an organisation called the Hindi Association which later became the Ghadr party with headquarters in San Francisco The association published a journal called *Ghadar* in Urdu and Punjabi [5] Har Dayal was its first editor He incurred the wrath of the American police for speaking against the tyranny of the Tzar of Russia and had to finally leave America The first confer en e of Indian revolutionaries abroad was held in Feb ruary 1904 at Stockton in California The Russians and Irish immigrants in the United States used to speak at the meetings held by the Ghadr party Indians were sore over the fact the United States had allowed itself to be bullied by the British Government into taking severe action against Indian revolutionaries A few radical Americans however supported the Indians and criticised their Government s servile attitude towards the British The activities of the Indians were not to the liking of the U S administration which thought that the Indians were making a nuisance of themselves

In 1922 the U S Supreme Court upheld a law forbid ding Indians from settling in the United States Indians who knew of the U S action—indeed very few knew of it then—associated it with the colour prejudice and the arrogance of the white man The unpleasant experience Rabindranath Tagore had in the United States when the west coast immigration authorities in 1929 were conspi

5 Manmathnath Gupta *History of Indian Revolutionary Movement* Somaiya Publications Pvt. Ltd Bombay 1972 p 41

cuously discourteous to him[6] high lighted the sad plight of Indians in the United States Tagore said of his experience later Jesus could not have got into America First of all he would not have necessary money and *secondly he would be an Asiatic* In the American mind there was a certain revulsion against the Indian a revulsion against what appeared to be his primitiv way of life This attitude found eloquent expression in *Mother India* a highly critical book written by Catherine Mayo the American author and published in 1927

The anti British and anti colonial sentiments that lingered on in the United States however made many American politicians and intellectuals criticise the British role in India and express sympathy for Indians In 1919 when the U S Senate discussed the treaty of Versailles a few senators were critical of the British rule in India One of them Joseph France said that the United States should not sign the treaty which gave Britain the right to exploit India

In March 1970 a resolution condemning the British rule in India was introduced in the U S House of Representatives by a Congressman but this was never discussed by the U S Congress In the 1930s U S clergymen left wing intellectuals and liberals who were bitter towards the British and had come into contact with Indian thought and culture expressed their support to India s struggle for *independence*

American interest in Indian affairs became greater during the second world war when over 100 000 U S soldiers were stationed in India After the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour in December 1941 and their thrust into south-east Asia India suddenly became important to Washington U S war supplies to China and the Soviet Union were going through India and there was serious apprehension in the minds of U S strategists that if India

6 W Norman Brown *The United States and India Pakistan Bangladesh* Harvard University Press Cambridge Mass 1972 p 396

were to fall the chances of defeating Japan would be reduced During the war the United States shipped to India goods worth over $2 billion Indian exports to the United States (rubber tea mica manganese etc) totalled $639 million Britain was dependent on U S men and material to continue the war in the east and therefore tolerated the U S presence in India After Japan captured Singapore the strategi importance of India increased Dwight D Eisenhower the supreme commander of the allied forces said Aside f om preserving means of air and sea communications to Australia we have to hold the Indian bastion at all costs otherwise a junction bet ween the Japanese and German forces would be accomp lished through the Persian Gulf 7

War produced a surge of opinion in favour of India in the United States Wendell Willkie Louis Fi cher Pearl Buck Henry Wallace and other American leaders spoke in support of India But official Washington was more concerned with the strengthening of war efforts than giving encouragement to the Indian national movement for inde pendence Washington was cautious in expressing its opinion about the political situation in India and even in recognising India s genuine difficulties as a result of the war The war at least made many Americans aware of the land mass called India Some State Department officials in 1941 even advocated self government for India But Cordell Hull secretary of state feared that such a step might upset the Indian apple cart at this critical juncture In February 1942 the Foreign Relations Committee of the U S Senate criticised the Roosevelt administration for not making any effort to give guidance to Britain in accepting the thesis of Gandhi s political objectives so that the support of the Indian people could be won for the war effort. Some American newspapers were also critical of Washington s weak policy towards India

In a discussion in February 1942 Roosevelt asked

7 Dwight D Eisenhower *Crusade in Europe* Doubleday New York 1948 p 48

Winston Churchill about India s future political status Churchill recorded later that he reacted so strongly that Roosevelt never raised the issue again Roosevelt how ever sent to India Louis Johnson as his personal repre sentative to study the political situation There was sym pathy for India in many quarters in America Even Cordell Hull who had opposed Indian independence vehemently has recorded in his memoirs that it was because of the *fear of offending the British sensibilities that the United* States had to take a rather unhelpful attitude not only on independence but on food aid Roosevelt is believed to have tried again to intervene on behalf of India

He advocated some amount of relaxation of the British hold on India He drafted a letter to Churchill urging him to take steps towards self government for India He said I wonder whether there is sufficient spirit to fight among the Indian people He advised the British Government to give India dominion status under a temporary government consisting of not more than thirty or forty persons of different parti s castes regions and occupations so that Indians could become more loyal to the British empire and see the advantage of peaceful evolution over revolu tion For the love of heaven Roosevelt concluded don t bring me into this It s none of my business except in so far as it is part and parcel of the successful fight you and I are making Louis Fischer reports that having written this he decided it was really none of his business and the letter was filed and never sent to Churchill 8 In 1943 when India faced one of history s biggest famines in which over three million people perished the United States was reluctant to give aid to India The U S Congress the Press and the Roosevelt administration did not view with favour any action by the United States that

8 Louis Fischer *The Road to Yalta* Harper and Row New York 1972 p 44 as copied at the Franklin D Roosevelt Library in Hyde Park Box I (Classified) *Political Military Messages Roosevelt to Churchill 1939 to October 1942*

might embarrass the British Government and arouse it opposition [9]

But unbiased non official opinion in the United States held that the famine in India was a war created famine and that India was a casualty of the war and one of its heaviest sufferers [10] The Roosevelt administration thought otherwise and excluded India from the scope of assistance from the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Ad ministration set up in 1943 to assist war ravaged nations The repeated efforts made by Indian and liberal U S leaders to persuade Washington to send assistance to India failed Between April 1 1944 and March 31 1945 the United States did not send any foodgrains to India When it became clear that no assistance could be expected from the U S Government friends of India led by Pearl Buck organised a non official relief programme Some oth r non-official organisations also sent relief But the help that came through these channels was meagre In contrast to the cold response to India s request for aid the United States gave $16 million to Soviet Union s war relief efforts India received no food aid at all from the United States and from President Roosevelt came not even a gesture of sympathy to the people of India [11]

When India again faced a serious food crisis in 1946 New Delhi looked towards Washington Arcot Rama swami Mudaliar who headed an Indian food delegation warned that India would again face a serious crisis if she were not given immediate help Referring to the famine of 1943 and 1944 Mudaliar said that while an estimated three million Indians died of starvation not one foreigner in India man woman or child prisoners of war from Italy or Germany refugees from Poland by the thousands—

9 M S Venkataramani *Under Currents in American Foreign Relations* Asia Publishing House Bombay 1965 p 9

10 *The New York Times* April 18 1945

11 M S Venkataramani *Under Currents in American Foreign Relations* p 38

not one foreign person was allowed to starve or suffer in any way during all that terrible period[12] Mudaliar s rhetoric fell on deaf ears

The United States was the affluent nation doling out foodgrains to the war ravaged nations but India was at the bottom of U S priorities Pre ident Truman misled the world by stating on April 11 1946 that crop prospects in India had improved as a result of rainfall[13] His statement which implied that there was no need to help India was *severely criticised both in the United States and India* The non official U S famine emergency relief committee for India issued a statement signed by chairman Pearl Buck and other members including Albert Einstein characterising Truman s statement as a grave injustice to the millions of Indians threatened with death by starvation

In a radio talk from Washington Arcot Ramaswami Mudaliar appealed to Americans to help India and told them that India was not asking for any gift We are asking for an allotment of cereals but we shall pay for *it—every grain India found that in the deliberations of* the combined food board[14] the American representative began by assessing India s allocation so low as 800 000 tonnes and went on to make India s claim a special target of attack while resisting suggested cuts in the claims of other countries in which the United States was interested[15] In his memoirs *Year of Decisions* Truman himself admitted that in many parts of the Orient the situation was even more critical than in the worst areas of Europe And yet he did not consider India high enough in his priorities to merit equal treatment with the famished nations of Europe

12 Quoted by M S Venkataramani p 51
13 *The New York Times* April 12 1946
14 The board consisted of representatives of the Govern ments of the United States Britain and Canada and was set up during the war to deal with foodgrain allo cations to allied nations
15 Mudaliar s report of the Indian food delegation

He had no animosity against India —India was just not important

After a great deal of persuasion the United States agreed to sell foodgrains to India and indeed in the 1950s and 1960s the United States gave India more foodgrains than any other country But the initial resistance and the sealing down of the quantity of foodgrains in the 1940s created more bitterness than gratitude in India George Jones the New Delhi correspondent of *The New York Times* reported in August 1946 that anti U S trend was growing in India and that food shipments aroused hostility He added Americans are depicted as money mad godless and immoral people unfit to take a leading role in world affairs Today more than a quarter century after this report was written the picture remains much the same

In the 1940s the United States had no separate policy towards India and was guided by Britain Despite the contacts the United States had established with India the two countries had very little to do with each other at the political level Some degree of commercial contacts continued and next to Britain the United States became the second important nation in India s external trade In fact in 1951 52 the U S share of India s import trade was bigger than that of Britain In 1953 the Indian Directorate General of Supplies and Disposals (DGS & D) made more purchases in the United States than in Britain The Minister for Works Housing and Supplies said in the Lok Sabha on April 29 1954 that in 1953 the DGS & D purchased goods worth Rs 27 50 crores in India Rs 19 23 crores in Britain and Rs 25 54 crores in the United States The trade with the United States dwindled after 1954 Britain had control over India s sterling balances and was able to force India to cut down imports from the United States

At the political level the first formal contact between India and the United States was established in 1946 when Nehru the head of the provisional government of India appointed Asaf Ali as the first Indian ambassador to the United States Dr Henry Grady was named the first U S ambassador to India in July 1947 The bitterness generated

by the tardy treatment of India by the United States during the days of the famine was forgotten The two countries moved closer to each other The Congress party to which the British transferred power in India was dominated by a well balanced admixture of bourgeois intellectuals, upper class landlords and a sprinkling of British educated lawyers This leadership considered the United States a progressive force The stigma of anti imperialism and anti colonialism *which the United States acquired in the 1950s was not there* in 1947 It was no wonder therefore that in a radio broad cast soon after the interim government was formed Nehru warmly greeted the people of the United States to whom d stiny has given a major role in international affairs While moving the objectives resolution in the constituent as embly of India in D c mber 1946 he spoke of the great American nation and of the Am rican constitution which had stood the test of time He saw in the United States a great champion of freedom and democracy After praising the United States he made only a brief reference to the Soviet Union That was India s perspective in 1947

The relationship between India and the United States soon became strained when the Kashmir issue was discus sed in the United Nations When India and Pakistan were created the princely States were given the option to join one or the other Kashmir was in a peculiar position It was a State with a Muslim majority and a Hindu maharaja and it bordered both India and Pakistan For many months the maharaja could not make up his mind about acceding to either India or Pakistan Lord Mountbatten the British viceroy assured the maharaja on behalf of the Indian lead ers that if he joined Pakistan Indians would not consider it an unfriendly act[16] When Pakistan found that Kashmir might finally opt to join India she decided to take Kashmir by force and invaded the State in October 1947 The maharaja asked India to help him to resist the Pakistani invaders and said he would accede to India But New Delhi

16 T J S George *Krishna Menon* Jonathan Cape London 1964 p 200

insisted that he should sign the instrument of accession before military assistance was given After he formally acceded to India New Delhi rushed troops to Kashmir and pushed back the raiders who were about to take Srinagar the capital A part of Kashmir remained in the hands of the raiders It was called Azad (free) Kashmir by Pakistan On the prodding of Lord Mountbatten India lodged a complaint with the United Nations in January 1948 requesting the world body to ask Pakistan to vacate the aggression When the issue was discussed in the U N security council the United States supported Pakistan partly as a result of pressure from Britain Washington took an unfriendly attitude towards India and wanted the U N security council not to sit in judgment over Pakistan s aggression but to decide on the terms of a plebiscite to determine whether the state should be part of India or Pakistan

Nehru had declared that he would like to give the people of Kashmir the chance to decide the issue of accession to India as soon as the invader had been driven from Kashmir soil No one had asked him to give such an assurance and perhaps there was no need for it But the democrat in Nehru believed that the will of the people should be respected and he repeatedly declared that the wishes of the people would be ascertained after Pakistan had vacated the aggression from Azad Kashmir The United States insisted on India agreeing to a plebiscite even before Pakistan vacated the aggression Warren Austin the U S representative at the United Nations conceded that with the accession of Jammu and Kashmir to India the State s sovereignty went over to India and that was how India happens to be petitioner here But he maintained that the tribal invasion of Kashmir did not constitute an act of aggression India thought that the United States had taken a strangely narrow view and felt distressed that it referred to the Kashmir crisis as a Hindu Muslim conflict and seemed to accept the Pakistani viewpoint that Kashmir should go to Pakistan The United States never condemn

ed the Pakistani aggression[17]

India suspected that the continued US support to Pakistan was tied up with the American hope of acquiring military bases in the Pakistan held portion of Kashmir adjoining the Soviet Union and China She believed that this was the reason for the major role the United States took in shaping the UN policy on Kashmir When the United Nations sent military observers to Kashmir to supervise the ceasefire Washington managed to include seventeen American nationals in the team of thirty six UN observers India s suspicion of US motives was strengthened when the two military officers whose names were suggested by the UN commission for Kashmir for appointment as plebiscite administrator were Americans General Bidell Smith was chosen and when he fell ill Admiral Nimitz was appointed Another US officer Major General Harry James Mallony was selected as deputy administrator Admiral Nimitz wanted to induct 3 000 US soldiers into Kashmir[18] but this did not take place as a result of the stiff opposition from India After India refused to accept arbitration by Admiral Nimitz the UN security council appointed Sir Owen Dixon an Australian as mediator General Eisenhower was earlier considered for the job[19]

After Ei enhower became the President his secretary of states John Foster Dulles took a special interest in Kashmir affairs *The New York Times* reported that Dulles on his return from a visit to India and Pakistan favoured the partition of Kashmir along the ceasefire line and a special status for the Kashmir valley possibly independence US interest in Kashmir was not confined to the debates in the United Nations It extended to secret moves to win over Kashmir leaders During his visit to Kashmir in May 1953 Adlai Stevenson the US senator was believed to

17 Nehru said in March 1954 that the United States has not only not condemned it (aggression) but we have been asked not to press it in the interest of peace

18 *The New York Times* August 14 1949

19 *The New York Herald Tribune* April 3 1951

have urged Sheikh Abdullah the Kashmir premier to repudiate Kashmir s accession to India and declare Kashmir independent This report was stoutly denied But doubts persisted in India about U S intentions On August 9 1953 Sheikh Abdullah was dismissed and placed under arrest by New Delhi Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad who succeeded Abdullah as premier charged that Abdullah had thought of declaring Kashmir independent with the help of a foreign power He said many foreign diplomats had visited Kashmir to impress on Abdullah the advantages of joining Pakistan or at least of being an independent country

Apart from the U S moves in the United Nations and the efforts of U S diplomats to win over Kashmir leaders some U S nationals were believed to have been involved in the fighting in Kashmir For a while Russell K. Haight who had the rank of Brigadier General and was an employee of a U S firm led the Pakistani raiders in their attack on Kashmir It was not clear whether he was a mercenary or was acting on behalf of his Government India noted with grave concern that the ammunition dumps left behind by the departing U S forces around Gilgit went into the hands of Pakistani raiders Robert Trumbull *The New York Times* correspondent in New Delhi reported on October 27 1947 that one of the planes which ferried Indian soldiers to Srinagar brought back to New Delhi two American explorers Nicol Smith author and lecturer and Loren Tutell cameraman Smith whom Trumbull described as an author was a U S intelligence agent who had earlier worked for the U S office of strategic service in France Siam India Ceylon and China 20

The United States declared that it desired peaceful relations between India and Pakistan but its actions left New Delhi in no doubt about U S tilt towards Pakistan More than any other single factor what has enfeebled India s ties with the United States is the U S tilt towards Pakistan At one time Nehru was so full of praise for the

20 L. Natarajan *American Shadow Over India*

United States that leftists in India had criticised him for what appeared to be his pro-American attitude He found some merit in the American political system but he was disheartened by the abuses to which the system was subjected to by biased immature politicians who supported dictatorial regimes against the interests of democracies When he saw how the pressures from war lords and munitions merchants forced Washington to work against India s interests and tilt towards Pakistan he lost faith in the United States The dispatches of I F Stone [21] the distinguished journalist who painted a different picture of the Korean war one which was at variance with the U S official verson at almost every point made a profound influence on Nehru and made him suspect every U S move in Asia By the end of 1954 he was so thoroughly opposed to U S moves in Asia that he was reported to have twitted Vijayalakshmi Pandit a former Indian ambassador in Washington that among the Congress party leaders she was the only pro American

The United States was ranged against India not only on the Kashmir issue but also on almost all major issues of vital concern to India In 1948 when Hyderabad tried to declare itself independent with Pakistan s encouragement and India used force to make the Nizam of Hyderabad accede to India the U S attitude was equivocal Washington declared that Hyderabad was a political issue with religious and communal overtones and announced that President Truman had received a request from the Nizam for support in settling his dispute with India When the issue was raised in the U N security council India argued that Hyderabad could not appeal to the council because it was not a sovereign State The United States challenged India s stand and voted against her Even after the Nizam acceded to India and withdrew his complaint the United States rebuked her Phillip Jessup the U S delegate in the United Nations said The use of force does not alter legal rights I believe that we would be all unanimous on this point

21 The author of *The Hidden History of the Korean War*

The Government of India does not predicate any right upon the use of force [22]

New Delhi and Washington found themselves in oppo site camps over the revolt in Asia against colonial regimes The United States feared not only communism but also Asian nationalism and defended the *status quo* and the con tinuance of colonial regimes It saw only a thin difference between communism and militant Asian nationalism Al though the Indian Government was not pro communist not even militantly nationalistic it disapproved of the witch hunting of communists and the blind opposition in the United States to the Soviet Union and China India was not apprehensive of any attack from the communist coun tries What she feared was the neo imperialism of the West She had emerged in the early 1950s as a leader of Asia and lent strong support to the struggle for independence in Asian and African countries The United States and India clashed at the United Nations and elsewhere over the issue of the independence of these colonial countries

The two countries were in opposite camps on the ques tion of China s admission to the United Nations India had historic ties with China although modern India knew less of China than the United States did Americans had made a deep thrust into China for nearly 60 years and after the Sino American treaty of 1884 they had adopted a protec tive attitude towards China and tried to counter the influ ence of Japan and Russia They had poured money into China and sent missionaries to educate the Chinese The two countries were allies in the fight against Japan in the second world war and the United States despite the oppo sition of its allies seated China as a permanent member of the U N security council But when Mao Tse tung came to power the United States was perturbed and began to work against China giving support to Chiang Kai shek who had set himself up as the head of the Government on a small island off the coast of China Although India had hob nobbed with Chiang Kai shek when he was on the main

22 U N security council Official Records No 3 p 5

land she recognised the revolution and welcomed Mao Tse tung s accession to power Nehru thought that the emergence of China as a unified country would change the balance of power in Asia The U S leaders on the other hand saw in Mao Tse tung the sinister apparition of inter national communism and could not understand India s en thusiasm for him Washington was sore over her recog nition of the Chinese regime in Peking

Americans wanted to wean the Indians away from the Chinese and developed a sudden interest in India She appeared to some observers in Washington as the only hope of stemming the tide of communism in Asia In August 1950 *The New York Times* said that U S hopes in Asia were pinned on India and that Nehru in a sense was the counter weight on the democratic side to Mao Tse tung The paper wrote that to have Pandit Nehru as an ally in the struggle for Asiatic support is worth many divisions Nehru did not want to be hostile towards the United States which was the first country outside the Commonwealth that he visited In 1949 he went there seeking goodwill and co operation Washington was most anxious to have Nehru s friendship but the inscrutable psychological and politic l barriers between the affluent United States and poverty stricken India did not allow the two countries to move closer to each other Both the countries had reservations about establishing a close alliance

Nehru s meetings with President Truman and Dean Acheson the U S secretary of state showed that no clear rapport existed between Washington and New Delhi Nehru was proud and suspicious Truman was indifferent and condescending Dean Acheson said of his meetings with Nehru that he came in a prickly mood annoyed by what he called American intervention Acheson reported with a touch of contempt that the great man arrived on O tober 11 I had hoped that uninhibited by a crowd of witnesses we might establish a personal relationship But he would not relax I was convinced Nehru and I were not destined to have a pleasant personal rela tionship He was one of the most difficult men with

whom I ever had to deal He talked to me as Queen Victoria said of Gladstone as though I were a public meeting 23

The New York Times which had seen in Nehru in August 1950 the hope of the future said a year later—in August 1951—that Jawaharlal Nehru was fast becoming one of the great disappointments of the post war era The United States accused India of adopting a basic pro Soviet tand of opposing U S policy in the United Nations and else where and of taking no interest in the collective security of what Washington called the free world One of the great motivations of Washington s foreign policy in the 1950s was its fear of the Soviet Union The United States sought to stop what it called communist expansion by increasing U S military establishments and helping other nations to build up their armed strength The U S military action in Korea Vietnam Laos and Cambodia were in part meant to stop the spread of communism Washington championed the concept of military alliances and declared that peace in a divided world could be achieved only through collective security India was opposed to this policy She feared it would lead to tensions where none existed and to the eventual domination of weak nations by the United States She felt that her national security would be safeguarded by following a policy of peaceful coexistence with other countries She ridiculed the U S apprehension of communist domination of the world

When civil war broke out in Korea the United States wanted to contain north Korea which according to Wash ington represented international communism India opposed this view and when the United States wanted a U N force to fight against north Korea India voted only for a U N presence in Korea She doubted the wisdom of sending U N armed forces to Korea and held that the function of the United Nations was not to fight but to offer mediation Though she did not join the U N armed forces sent to

23 Dean Acheson *Present at the Creation* Hamish Hamilton London 1970 pp 75 76

Korea she sent an ambulance unit But she was firm against enlarging the war When the U N forces under U S command wanted to cross the 30th parallel and take the war into north Korea she pointed out that the U N resolution called for only repelling aggression from south Korea She was secretly happy when China went to the aid of north Korea and drove back the U N forces

When peace talks began in Panmunjom in July 1951 the warring parties came to an agreement on all issues except on the repatriation of prisoners The negotiation on this issue started in January 1952 went on for about a year with two interruptions One of the peculiar aspects of the situation was that over 130 000 prisoners were held by the Unit d Nations command The north Koreans refused to furnish any information about the prisoners held by them. The U N command largely in the hands of the United States and dominated by General MacArthur undertook a massive propaganda campaign among the prisoners it held and as a result of this many prisoners agreed to stay on in the south and not go back to north Korea The United Nations command—in other words the U S military command—argued that prisoners should be allowed to decide for themselves whether they wished to be repatriated North Korea and China insisted that all prisoners from both sides should be sent back The provisions of the Geneva convention of 1949 on prisoners of war supported the communist argument The convention had stipulated that POWs should be released and repatriated without delay after the cessation of hostilities and that they might under no circumstances renounce the rights secured to them by the convention The two sides were so divided on the issue that they threatened to start hostilities

India took a mediatory role and prepared a plan to resolve the deadlock She suggested that the repatriation of the POWs should be entrusted to a commission rather than to the United Nations as the United Nations was itself a party to the fi hting in Korea A lot of suspicion was aroused in the United States about India s move On this issue Anthony Eden the British foreign secretary and the

foreign minister of Australia supported Krishna Menon who represented India at Panmunjom Menon managed to isolate the United States from its traditional allies Dean Acheson bitterly opposed India s views He recorded later Menon using his fussiness of expression and unwillingness to furnish any written text as handmaids of deception had enmeshed the other two in a proposal that was an abort face 24 Eden is reported to have told Acheson that if the two of them made any agreement he would have to inform Menon India proposed the return of prisoners under the supervision of a four member neutral nations repatriation commission and in accordance with the provisions of the Geneva convention the principles and practice of international law, and the provisions of the armistice accord Britain welcomed the plan The United States initially opposed it The Soviet Union characterised the plan as a rotten solution After the Indian proposal was attacked by the Soviet Union the United States approved the plan In 1953 when the peace terms were finally signed India s plan was accepted by the parties and India became the chairman of he neutral nations repatriation commission

Although the United States finally accepted the Indian plan and Dean Acheson the U S secretary of state praised Krishna Menon for his dedication to peace Washington did not forget for a long time the firm stand India took against the United States on Korea Discussing the Indian diplomatic moves Dean Acheson later remarked in his memoirs I have never been able to escape wholly a childhood illusion that if the world is round the Indians must be standing on their heads or perhaps vice-versa 25 The American failure in Korea made Washington more suspicious not only of communist regimes but also of India

New Delhi however continued to extend its hand of friendship to the United States In December 1950 Nehru said in Parliament that he thought the United States since-

24 Dean Acheson *Present at the Creation* Hamish Hamilton London 1970 pp 333 335

25 *Ibid* p 4 0

rely desired peace No one can assert that America wants war I cannot imagine anything more unlikely If America wanted war who could have stopped her ? She obviously does not She wants to avoid war "[26] In June 1952 he again demonstrated India s willingness to co-operate with the United States when he declared in Parliament that India had closer economic bonds with Britain and the United States than with other countries He said that the fact that some people obsessed by passion and prejudice disapproved of India s relations with the Anglo-American bloc was not sufficient reason for India to break off a bond which was advantageous to India We are perfectly willing to deal with the Soviet Union or any other country that can supply us with the particular goods that we need but the fact remains that at the moment it is simpler and easier for us to import things from America from England from France and other countries He did not want to hide his preference for commercial ties with the West particularly the United States

26 *India s Foreign Poli y* Nehru s speeches p 53

6

INDIA AND PAKISTAN EQUATED

IN the early 1950s India was not half as close to the Soviet Union as she was to the United States She tried her best to be on good terms with Washington Despite India s policy of non alignment she leaned towards the West 1 But the difference in the psychology of the two nations the complex of each other s past experiences and above all the assessment of the needs of their national security prevented them from getting closer The United States naturally moved closer to those countries which appreciated its values motives and policies It found that in the fight against communism Pakistan would be a more faithful friend than India. President Truman had said in 1953 that though Pakistan was one of the youngest nations she was already progressive and powerful He had added Its friendship for the West may become an important factor in giving stability to the near-east At the same time Pakistan is a valuable ally in south Asia because of its strategic location in the Indian ocean and its control of land bases in central Asia

After Eisenhower became President Truman s thesis was translated into action In October 1953 Washington invited Mohammad Ali the prime minister of Pakistan and Ayub Khan the commander in-chief to visit the United

1 William J Barnds *India Pakistan and the Great Powers* Praeger Publishers Inc New York 1972 p 65

States Ayub Khan asked Washington to give him arms which Pakistan could not produce so that Pakistanis could strengthen U S defences in Asia Ghulam Muhammad the governor general of Pakistan joined the two Pakistani leaders in Washington and the three of them negotiated a close U S Pakistan alliance On October 2 1953 *The New York Times* reported that the United States had sought military bases in Pakistan in exchange for arms Eisenhower sent vice president Nixon and secretary of state Dulles to Pakistan and India in December 1953 According to Russell Brines who accompanied the vice president although Nixon was greeted by tremendous and friendly Indian crowds Nehru went out of his way to darken the visit by publicly flattering a minor Soviet official who was in the country at the same time [2] Nehru had not done anything by design to darken the visit He was only giving expression to the mood of the nation when he warmly wel omed the Soviet official

At the end of his visit to India and Pakistan Dulles had nothing to say about India But he publicly stated that he found warm friendship in Pakistan and that the strong spiritual faith and martial spirit of the (Pakistani) people make them a dependable bulwark against communism [3] According to the *United States News and World Report* [4] Nixon tended to favour military aid to Pakistan as a counter force to the continued neutralism of Jawaharlal Nehru s India In May 1954 the United States and Pakistan signed a mutual aid and security agreement It made Pakistan a close ally of the United States and a part of the Dulles dream of containing the Soviet Union by building a defensive line stretching from western Europe to Japan This line had however gaps in Afghanistan India and south east Asia

2 Russell Brines *The Indo-Pakistani Conflict* Pall Mall Press London 1968 p 120

3 *American Foreign Policy* 1950 55 Basic Documents Vol II U S State Department Publication 6446 released in December 1957 p 2172

4 January 4 1954

India s refusal to become a part of this defensive line and be a partner in the crusade against Moscow irked Washington Nixon described the pact with Pakistan as an oppor tunity to build a counter force to Nehru s neutralism in the Indian leader s *own back yard* He also said that U S policy should be based not on any fear of angering Nehru 5

President Eisenhower gave the military pact a garb of respectability and said that the United States was concerned over the weakness of the defensive capabilities of the coun tries in west Asia and was therefore complying with the request from Pakistan for military aid When Nehru pro tested against the pact Washington replied that India might also take military aid from the United States Nehru had earlier rejected the U S offer of military aid He wrote to Eisenhower If we object to military aid being given to Pakistan we would be hypocrites and unprincipled oppor tunists to accept such aid for ourselves The U S arms aid to Pakistan and the deliberate downgrading of India by Washington made Nehru distrust the United States

Another issue that bedevilled India s ties with the United States was the admission of China to the United Nations While India continued to advocate the seating of China in the world council the United States stoutly opposed it India wanted to bring China into the United Nations so that the United States and China could be brought together She thought that if Washington would recognise the Peking based Chinese Government the possibility of the U S backed Taiwan (the Chinese regime under Chiang Kai-shek) becoming a threat to peace in the area would be minimised China with her size and history and potential strength could not be ignored India wanted the United States to show some goodwill towards China She was encouraged by the fact that the Chinese and American leaders had sat down at the negotiating table in Geneva at the time of the Indo-China conference Krishna Menon asked the U S leaders to show some sign of goodwill towards Peking-

5 Salig Harrison *Harper s Magazine* July, 1966

Discussing India s efforts to bring China and the United States together Eisenhower reports in his memoirs By July 1955 Mr Menon had visited me twice in company with secretary Dulles to talk about the establishment of a basis of mediation between red China and ourselves Both times I have told him bluntly that there was no use of even mentioning it as long as Americans were unjustly held as prisoners by the communists in red China to be used as pawns in bargaining 6

Menon visited Peking in 1955 and persuaded China to release four U S airmen held prisoners there The United Nations had earlier condemned the imprisonment of the U S airmen and secretary general Hammarskjold had visited Peking to plead with Chinese leaders to release the airmen The Chinese leaders gave Hammarskjold no satisfactory reply and he returned empty handed from Peking Menon persuaded Peking to release the four U S airmen as a gesture of goodwill towards the United States On his return to the United States he tried to persuade the U S leaders to match the Chinese action by an act of goodwill But he failed to produce any change in the American attitude towards China The net result of this exercise was that India became more suspect in the eyes of American leaders

In spite of the differences between Washington and New Delhi on major political is ues the United States continued to give economic assistance to India By a specious reasoning Indian leaders justified the taking of economic aid from the United States while continuing to call the donor imperialist and colonial The United States also justified giving aid to countries like India by stating that even economic aid that helped the poverty stricken people of India would be a weapon against communism Some U S leaders advocated that India s second five year Plan should be supported by the United States so that India might win what they saw as the undeclared race between India and China

6 Dwight D Eisenhower *The White House Years Waging Peace* Doubleday & Co Inc New York 1965 p 107

Dulles said that Nehru was ' dedicated to the democratic form of government and added We believe that India s great effort to achieve economic progress should be sup ported It is essential that we continue to help if for no other reason than to serve our enlightened self interest In August 1956 India and the United States signed an agreement under which Washington agreed to supply from its surplus stock of foodgrains 3 5 million tonnes of wheat 0 2 million tonnes of rice and 0 5 million bales of cotton to India and to receive the payment in rupees

The U S and India tried their very best to be agree able to each other in 1956 The two countries worked in close consultation with each other in the United Nations during the Suez canal crisis While negotiations were in progress for the settlement of the dispute over Egypt s nationalisation of the canal Israel Britain and France had attacked Egypt on July 26 1956 India condemned the invasion as an imperialist act The United States also took a very critical view of the British and French action The strong U S criticism and the threat of intervention by the Soviet Union ended the fighting India s point of view and the resolutions she along with eighteen Afro Asian nations introduced in the United Nations were favoured by the United States The reasons which made the two countries adopt a rather similar approach on the Suez issue were not the same India s protest was against what she considered an imperialist act The U S criticism of Britain and France stemmed from the fear that the Soviet Union might inter vene and the U S position in west Asia might be weakened The difference between India and the United States in their fundamental approach to world problems manifested itself soon enough over the Hungarian revolt which took place just about the same time as the Suez crisis The revolt and the subsequent Soviet intervention pushed non aligned countries like India into an embarrassing situation While India hesitated to condemn the Soviet Union she found it hard to support the U S stand Official Washington how ever was not worried about India s stand and tried to understand it On the w ole despite the many minor

irritations the mood in 1956 both in New Delhi and Washington was one of friendliness

In December 1956 Nehru visited the United States and praised Eisenhower whose humanity and whose distinguished and devoted service to the cause of peace have won for him a unique place among the statesmen of the world [7] He told Americans that he thought the United States was the leader of a new age of science and technology and that "it has added greatly to its prestige by upholding worthily the principles of the Charter of the United Nations On his return from the United States Nehru declared in New Delhi that his exchange of views with Eisenhower had been very helpful and that it had removed many misunderstandings and paved the way for a better appreciation of each other Nehru called Eisenhower a man of peace Eisenhower in turn gave Nehru the certificate that he was not a crypto communist But the visit was not an unqualified success Eisenhower did not approve of Nehru s views on many matters and told the Prime Minister that he failed to understand why Asians were less alarmed by the domination of east Europe by the Soviet Union than by the few vestiges of Western colonialism Eisenhower has written in his memoirs I was so disappointed to find none of these seemed wholly convincing to the Prime Minister at least he gave no expression of emphatic concurrence [8]

The debate in the United Nations over the Kashmir issue a month after Nehru s return to India from the United States—in January 1957—showed the basic U S resentment against New Delhi India was upset by the persistent U S attempts to help Pakistan In 1957 when the United Nations again discussed the Kashmir issue the United States was firmly on the side of Pakistan which had by then become a member of the American sponsored

7 From a statement in Washington on December 16 1956
8 Dwight D Eisenhower *The White House Years Waging Peace* Doubleday & Co Inc New York 1965 p 112

Baghdad pact and was closer to the United States During the U N debate even before hearing India s arguments the United States and four other nations tabled a resolution which began Having heard the representative of India

The resolution introduced by the United States was vetoed by the Soviet Union but the United States persisted in its efforts to support Pakistan It managed to get a resolution passed permitting Jarring the president of the U N security council to go to the sub-continent on a mediatory mission

Nehru was angered by the U S attitude and in a speech in December 1957 said The five power resolution was pushed through and hustled through the security council even without trying to understand what the position was The resolution which the security council passed was drafted and was in existenc~ even before it (the council) took the trouble of hearing our representative What pains me is that the countries which are friends of ours should have considered this difficult question in this casual way Three weeks later he said that the Kashmir question has acquired a special importance in the context of this U S military aid to Pakistan

Although the United States gave military aid to Pakistan and supported her in the United Nations it could not ignore India Nor could India go without U S assistance at that time The visit to the United States of finance minister T T Krishnamachari in 1957 and Morarji Desai in 1958 helped to remove some of the accumulated suspicion of each other s motives The Indo U S investment treaty of 1957 the tax concessions to U S investors in the 1958 finance act and the 1959 treaty for avoiding double taxation pleased the Americans and improved the outlook for U S investment in India bringing about considerable understanding between the two countries in the economic sphere

Eisenhower was not altogether unfriendly to India and was impatient and unhappy that India was not fully on the side of the United States One of his teenage ambitions was to see India—as he put it a youngster s wish to see

India In 1959 when he was finalising his plans to visit Asia he is believed to have asked a friend whether he could receive an invitation to visit India B K Nehru who later became Indian ambassador to the United States and was in Washington then heard of Eisenhower s desire He telephoned Jawaharlal Nehru and told him of the U S President s wish Nehru immediately extended an official invitation Eisenhower received a tumultuous welcome in New Delhi He wrote in his memoirs that the whole teeming boisterous confused happy crowd outdid in size anything I had seen including those of the victory celebrations in the great cities of America and Europe Nehru himself thought that the crowd was the largest he had seen since independence [9] In New Delhi Eisenhower said Between the first largest democracy on earth India and the second largest America lie 10 000 miles of land and ocean But in our fundamental ideas and convictions about democracy we are close neighbours We ought to be closer

The apparent warmth in India for the United States in 1959 and the determination of the leaders of both the count ies to come closer notwithstanding the strong undercurrent of antipathy fouled the ties between the two countries Eisenhower wrote that to many Americans Nehru had been a somewhat inexplicable and occasionally exasperating personality [10] Nehru s inexplicable persona lity his moralising attitude or his alleged quixotic manners might have very well exasperated Americans But what divided India and the United States was not Nehru s per onality for he was in favour of building friendly relations with the United States The hiatus

9 This reception was in sharp contrast to the violent anti U S demonstration in Tokyo which compelled Eisenhower a year later to cancel his visit to Japan which was then closer to the United States than India was

10 Dwight D Eisenhower *The White House Years Waging Peace* p 107

occurred as a result of the U S policy of not allowing India to become a big power and of strengthening Pakistan at the expense of India. Despite Nehru s effusive praise for Eisenhower and New Delhi s tumultuous welcome for the U S President Eisenhower found Pakistan and her leaders more agreeable than India and Nehru After his visit to Pakistan Eisenhower said of Ayub Khan the Pakistan President. There seems to be something in the chemistry of humans that often determines on their first contact whether or not any two easily become friends or are mutually repelled From the very beginning I conceived for President Ayub Khan a warm affection which still endures

But the paradox was that the United States with all its fondness for dictators could not forget its basic democratic urges It competed with the Soviet Union in giving aid to India and making itself liked by her The fear of the spread of communist influence in India made U S critics change their tone and support aid to New Delhi Senator Kennedy who later became U S President was one of those who pleaded strongly for long term economic assistance to India In November 1959 he said that the United States wanted India to win the race with red China He added But if our interest appears to be purely selfish anti-communist and part of the cold war—if it appears to the Indian people that our motives are purely political—then we shall cruelly distort America s image abroad [11]

Towards the end of the 1950s Nehru advocated the use of the negotiating table to solve the issues that divided the East and the West He thought that his efforts had reduced world tensions and brought about a thaw in international relations He said in the Lok Sabha in 1959 that whether it is in the United Nations or whether it is elsewhere we are respected all over the world He added that India s voice counted in the councils of the world We may have become conceited about it There was some room for conceit, I admit but the fact is that a country which is

11 John F Kennedy *The Strategy of Peace* 1960 p 143

struggling hard to get rid of its poverty has counted for so much in the world for the last few years

After John F Kennedy entered the White House for a short while India became a hot favourite with Washington In his inaugural address to a joint session of the U S Congress he publicly acknowledged the soaring idealism of Nehru Pakistan was deeply upset *Dawn* wrote in February 1961 that by receiving aid from both sides they (India and UAR) have created competition among the big powers and by retaining a policy of non alignment have had the blocs serenading to them round the clock Ayub Khan said in May 1961 that he thought U S policy smacked of weakness and indecision He said he doubted the wisdom of military alliances It was after this that Pakistan turned to China

The United States stepped up economic aid to India From 1947 to 1959 in twelve years it had given India only about $1 7 billion as aid But in the next four years it gave her as much as $4 billion With understandable annoyance Peking called India pro American and said that the more anti China India was the greater was the increase in the U S aid *The U S News and World Report* said in May 1961 that India s policies have become more favourable to the United States It said In April 24 hours after attacking U S intervention in Cuba Nehru reversed himself calling President Kennedy dynamic and suggesting that there might be two sides to the Cuban story The weekly said that Nehru was turning out to be a top favourite of the Kennedy administration among the statesmen of the world India co operated with the United States on the Congo issue in the United Nations and opposed the Soviet Union s campaign against a second term for Dag Hammarskjold Nehru supported the British move for a ceasefire in Laos and urged Khrushchev to accept it On May 18 1961 Krishna Menon supported the stand of the Western powers against the veto provisions demanded by Moscow

Kennedy was indeed close to India and wanted to work for world peace in co operation with Nehru Arthur M

Schlesinger Jr Kennedy s biographer and aide classified Nehru and Kennedy as the only two leaders who share that address the patrician instinct and long historical view which made them next to Churchill the two great statesmen on the British model of their day In November 1961 wh n Nehru visited the United States Kennedy compared him with Abraham Lincoln and Roosevelt Yet he and Nehru did not get clo er Schlesinger reported that Nehru alas was no longer the man that he had once been and said that Nehru s visit was described by Kennedy as a disaster Kennedy found that when he sought clarification from Nehru on international issues Nehru was far from helpful in throwing light on India s stand During a dinner at the White Hou e it was not Nehru but Indira Gandhi who assailed the President about American foreign policy praised Krishna Menon and otherwise elevated the mood of the evening [12] Schlesinger further said that Kennedy s vision of India had been much larger before the visit than it would ever be again

After India took Goa by force in 1961 Adlai Stevenson the great American liberal acting on behalf of Washington painted India as an aggressor in the United Nations Stevenson later thought that his speech in the United Nations on Goa was not one of his best and did not publish it in a collection containing all his speeches because he did not want to be judged by the harsh words he had used against India Stevenson s anger towards India was perhaps the result of the criticism levelled against him for his alleged secret talks with Sheikh Abdullah on Kashmir

In January 1962 Kennedy sent Henry Kissinger to India to study the situation after widespread criticism in the United States of India s action in Goa Kissinger declared in New Delhi on January 6 1962 that we are not going to spite India because of Goa in the matter of the Kashmir dispute when it is raised before the security council He also said that the United States would be

12 Arthur M Schlesinger Jr *A Thousand Days* Andre Deutsch London 1965 p 456

most sympathetic to whatever action India might take against China The assessment of Kissinger and other U S observers was that U S ties with India should be strengthened Agreeing with this assessment the U S President saw the need to help India to achieve economic progress even though he had lost his earlier hope that India would be a great affirmative force in the world Three years earlier on March 15 1958 he had stated in the Senate that the United States should do well to recall that India has passed the point of economic take off and has launched upon an effort which will by the end of the century make her one of the big powers of the world That hope was gone The basic differences reasserted themselves

Goa Kashmir and Pakistan were all issues even a Kennedy could not side step Although Kennedy began his *short term as President with the promise of closer co* operation with India he soon became thoroughly disillusioned with India and solicitous towards Pakistan Even when he gave aid to India he doubted the wisdom of giving it On September 12 1963 two months before he was assassinated at a Press conference he said The fact of course is we want to assist India which may be attacked by China So we do not want India to be helpless with half a billion people On the other hand everything we give to India adversely affects the balance of power with Pakistan which is a much smaller country So we are dealing with a very very complicated problem because the hostility between them is so deep Lyndon Johnson his vice president upon the conclusion of his Asian tour in 1961 had written to Kennedy as follows President Ayub in Pakistan is singularly impressive He is seasoned as a leader where others are not confident and straightforward and I would judge dependable 13

13 Herbert Feldman *Revolution in Pakistan* Oxford University Press Karachi 1961 quoted by William S White *in The Professional A Political Biography of President L B Johnson*

Kennedy seemed to have accepted Johnson s assessment His policy finally turned out to be one of giving loans to India and guns to Pakistan He committed $5,000 million in economic aid to India but sent twelve F 104 supersonic warplanes to Pakistan

After Lyndon Johnson became President in November 1963 there was a re appraisal of the policy towards India Washington decided to adopt an even handed attitude towards India and Pakistan For a short while it closed its eyes to Pakistan s liaison with China Phillips Talbot the U S assistant secretary of state for near-east and south Asia affairs justified Pakistan s alliance with China and said in April 1964 that the United States should seek to accomplish its objective without infringing upon the sovereignty of Pakistan We continue to believe that our national interests and those of Pakistan coincide and this is recognised by Pakistan as well

New Delhi did not receive the aid it had expected from the United States after the Chinese attack and did not receive any equipment that could be used against Pakistan The United States gave no tanks or warplanes to India.

It can now be revealed that in December 1962 when a U S military mission came to India to assess the requirements of the defence services the United States had offered India 500 Walker Bulldog tanks equipped with 76 mm guns At that time the Indian army had only about 1 000 tanks in all and another 500 tanks would have meant a great accession of strength A crew of 150 men was ready to fly to Fort Knox in the United States and the men had their inoculation and vaccination as preparation for the journey

But the whole deal was eventually cancelled because the United States insisted that the tank brigade should be raised and stationed east of Patna as close to the Chinese border as possible and that India give a firm guarantee that the brigade would never go west to face Pakistanis The tanks offered were old

All that India received after protracted negotiations in

1963 and 1964 were transport aircraft and spare parts light infantry weapons for mountain divisions communications engineering and medical equipment Washington obtained firmer guarantees from India on the use of these materials than those it had secured when it gave tanks *supersonic planes and other sophisticated weapons to* Pakistan

India was o scrupulous in adhering to these guarantees that during the Indo Pakistan war in 1965 when some divisions from east India were moved to the west New Delhi insisted on the troops leaving behind all the equipment received from the United States

In 1965 New Delhi was *able to wear down* a little bit the U S indifference to India Just before and after the war between India and Pakistan in 1965 there was a brief period when the United States was disillusioned with Islamabad The United States postponed from July to September 1965 the World Bank consortium meeting to decide on the extent of aid to Pakistan and brought pressure on Ayub Khan not to get close to Peking But U S officials went to great l n,ths to assure him that aid to *India was not against Pakistan Islamabad was unhappy* about the U S stand Bhutto said it is enough to say great disappointment was felt in Peking about the American attitude [14]

Although in 1965 American friends of India expressed the hope that the United States should have a closer alliance with India Washington s attitude was not very *helpful When India faced economic hardship* a severe famine and crop failure Washington attempted to win over India by making tempting offers to New Delhi It also tried to sell their friendship to Kamaraj who was then the Congress President [15] Vice President Hurbert Humphrey is believed to have invited Kamaraj to visit the United States but the latter politely turned down the

14 Zulfikar Ali Bhutto *The Myth of Independence* Oxford University Press London 1969 p 76

15 Girish Mathur *New Wave* August 5 1973

offer drawing Humphrey s attention to his black skin and wondering how welcome he would be After China detonated the first atom bomb towards the end of 1964 Chester Bowles the U S ambassador in India said that a closer military alliance with the U S could bring the entire nuclear power of the Seventh Fleet into the frontier struggle on the side of India and India would have not only the atomic bombs but the much more devastating hydrogen bombs at her disposal in the fleet arsenal of weapons These were the pious wishes of a friend and ambassador who was out of step with the thinking of Washington and New Delhi

The best treatment New Delhi received from Washington was when it forgot to tilt in favour of Islamabad and equated India and Pakistan When President Johnson postponed Ayub Khan s scheduled visit to Washington to show disapproval of Pakistan s close ties with China for no apparent reason he asked India s Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri also to postpone his visit to Washington *India s request for $500 million military aid which defence* minister Chavan had placed before the United States in 1964 was less than half of what Washington had by then given Pakistan But even this request was turned down by Washington As Chester Bowles said most of the U S military assistance had been given not for legitimate purposes of defence but in effect as a bribe to persuade the recipient government to support the U S foreign policy

Johnson s disagreement with Ayub Khan over Pakistan s friendship with Peking was a minor affair The U S President admired Ayub Khan s internal policies He had no appreciation of India s efforts to become self sufficient His response to Ind a s request for food shipments after the famine in 1966 67 was negative In his memoirs he says he did not rush it impulsively and try to solve the immediate problem of ten or twenty million hungry people simply by pouring food into their markets He argued that by rushing food the United States would have contributed to a much more serious problem of starvation in later years He accused Indians of not taking America s advice on

developing agriculture and pouring most of their energy and resources into a strenuous campaign of developing a major industrial base For them steel mills and other features of modern economy were what mattered most as visible evidence of progress In a bid to bend India he held up grain shipments from August to December 1966 He said that during this period his policy was the target of a heavy propaganda barrage In the Press and in Washington cocktail parties I was pictured as a heartless man willing to let innocent people starve

After accusing Indians of being hopelessly inept and inefficient John on tried to take India under his wings He treated India like a kid and chided her and then tried to win her respect and love Towards the end of 1966 he invited Indira Gandhi to visit Washington He feared that if both Pakistan and China moved away from the United States Washington would have no friends in the area He also did not want India to move closer to the Soviet Union He told a friend She (Indira Gandhi) has only to send a telegram and I shall roll the red carpet to her [16] Her visit was a success if external signs were taken into consideration She and Johnson had highly informative frank and friendly discussions which resulted in valuable personal understanding between their two countries and their two peoples Johnson was impressed by Indira Gandhi He said that as President he had received twenty one heads of governments. This Indian meeting was the most satisfying No meeting had accomplished so much for so many [17]

Johnson announced at a dinner at the White House in honour of Indira Gandhi that the United States was prepared to assist in the setting up of an Indo American educational foundation which would be financed by the huge reserves of rupees that the United States had accumulated in India from the sale of wheat over a period of years It was proposed that $300 million worth of rupees would be

16 Please see also chapter 2.

17 *The Times of India* April 4 1966

given to the foundation The President also offered Indira Gandhi the ship *Anton Brun* (President Harry Truman s old yacht *Williamsburg*) which had been rebuilt and equipped for deep sea research Johnson paid glowing tribute to Indira Gandhi The Indian Prime Minister also felt greatly satisfied with the visit She was impressed by Johnson s sincerity and described him as a man of peace After this satisfying visit she returned to New Delhi in a Soviet aircraft

Within a few hours of her departure from Washington Johnson asked U S Congress to approve an emergency shipment of 3 5 million tonnes of U S grain in addition to 6 5 million tonnes already provided by Washington in the fiscal year ending June 30 1966 He also asked Congress to approve the shipment of 150 million pounds of vegetable oil and 125 million pounds of milk powder By a voice vote and without opposition both Houses of th_ Congress approved on April 19 a resolution which endorsed and supported the President s actions Thus the PL -480 food supplies which had been put by Johnson on a cautious month to month basis were resumed on a long term basis A month later India entered into an agreement with the American International Oil Company for setting up India s largest fertiliser plant in Madras

Indira Gandhi succeeded in establishing a rapport with the U.S President on the basis of mutual appreciation of each other s problems The United States made determined efforts to loosen New Delhi s bonds with Moscow A 7 member group of senators headed by Wayne Morse after a tour of India said that U S interests were closely tied with those of India not only because of its strategic location but because it was the most populous nation in the world which chooses its government by free elections For a while it seemed that the United States had given up its policy of equating Pakistan and India India devalued the rupee and made heavy concessions to the World Bank She also toned down her attack of the U S role in Vietnam

All these measures did not solve India s immediate eco

nomic problems and Indira Gandhi came under pressure from the left in India to repudiate the understanding reached with Johnson The leftist journals were bitterly critical of her The *Mainstream*[18] said that Indira Gandhi had gone out of her way to offer testimonial to the U S Peace Corps and President Johnson had earned her tribute as sincerely wanting peace in Vietnam There was of course a come hither call for the Wall Street to invest in India and there was sentimental effusion at Mr Johnson s staying on uninvited for dinner at ambassador B K Nehru s party Indira Gandhi seemed to have realised that India s policy lacked realism and that she had become a prisoner of rightist elements in her party She changed her stand The change was evident in India s forthright support to north Vietnam her anti U S stand on west Asia and independent line of action on other international issues The new policy upset Washington s calculation In July Washington was forced to set aside Johnson s proposal to finance an Indo U S educational foundation

Johnson s proposal to present *Anton Brun* the old reconditioned yacht also came to nothing The vessel was to have been delivered in Bombay in September 1966 It did not arrive even in March 1967 And when ambassador Bowles queried Washington he got the reply that unfortunately the *Anton Brun* sank last week in the New York harbour while being launched from dry dock The relations between India and United States became strained in 1967 after Washington decided to resume military aid to Pakistan The U S Government asked West Germany Belgium Italy and finally Turkey to sell hundred American tanks to Pakistan for a nominal price on the assurance that Washington would replace the tanks with an equivalent number of the most modern U S tanks to strengthen our NATO allies These countries did not supply the tanks but the Johnson administration s image went down in India as a result of the U S decision to resume arms aid to Pakistan

18 Republic Day Special Issue 1967

Soon after Nixon became U S President the relations between the two countries worsened and a stalemate was reached in 1969 The Pakistani request for arms was repeated in 1970 and was granted Washington distrusted Indira Gandhi s Government and became more critical of New Delhi The split in the Congress party was interpreted by Washington as a sign of decadence of the political system in India Some U S analysts even predicted that soon there would be a state of chaos in India The United States withdrew its support to Indira Gandhi and began cultivating those who opposed her in the Congress party This was bitterly resented by her Washington viewed the split in the Congress party the nationalisation of banks and the independent posture New Delhi adopted in foreign affairs as a dangerous portend It saw a marked turn to the left in Indian affairs The exit of leaders like Morarji Desai and S K Patil from New Delhi was viewed with suspicion by Washington and the relations between the two countries again slumped

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THE UNITED STATES IN ASIA

THE massive U S presence in Asia has inhibited the growth of good relations between India and her neighbours India s desire to establish a permanent alliance for peace in Asia has been thwarted not so much by the opposition from China as by the importance the United States has attached to China India recognises that China is a big power and her military and political strength counts in any evaluation of Asian affairs But what has divided Asia more than all the diplomatic moves by China more than regional and racial differences is the U S policy of capitalising on the fear China evokes in her neighbours Thailand the Philippines Pakistan South Korea Japan and South Vietnam have been partners of the United States in its crusade against China Even countries which do not have formal military pacts with the United States have been influenced by the U S posture in Asia Ceylon s rigid neutralism Burma s isolationism and Nepal s insular attitude are in varying degrees influenced by the U S policy in Asia

India s interests do not always correspond to those of the other countries in the area India is too big and perhaps too proud to be the junior partner in an alliance She believes she has her own role Her objective is not only to oppose Chinese expansionism but also U S interventionism She found that the American inspired military pacts had brought cold war divisions to Asia and created discord The United States defended the pacts on the ground that the

Soviet Union and China had signed a 30-year security treaty in 1950 and that Peking might launch military attacks to conquer non communist States in Asia It bracketed the Soviet Union and China and took upon itself the task of destroying the two communist giants For the United States communism became a convenient bogey that could be used to frighten weak nations into submission much in the same manner it had once used Japan

American involvement in Asia is not of recent origin Britain France Portugal the Netherlands and Spain had their colonies in Asia and monarchies at home The United States was different It was a democracy and it had the image of being a great champion of freedom But this did not prevent the United States from involving itself in all the major disputes in Asia and in administering colonies for about five decades Within ten years of the declaration of American independence U S presence was felt in Asia In Canton the old capital of China U S merchants arrived in 1788 They were followed by government officials The United States signed commercial treaties with Siam and Japan In 1833 in Siam it established its first diplomatic mission in Asia A decade later it received extra territorial rights from China It wanted to enter into a treaty with Japan but the latter refused in the beginning and signed only a trade treaty in 1854 With the fall of the Philippines into U S hands in 1899 the nature of the U S presence in Asia became not only commercial but also military The Philippines was an unexpected nonetheless welcome gift a by product of the American Spanish war over Cuba

In the Philippines the United States suppressed a war of national liberation by using 70 000 American troops It maintained a powerful navy to safeguard the Philippines and built naval bases at strategic points such as Hawaii and Guam in the Pacific Louis Halle a U S historian thinks that the acquisition of the Philippines constitutes the root of our dangerous and difficult embroilment in the Far East ever since He says that the war with Japan from 1941 to 1945 the subsequent Korean war and the stalemate along the straits of Formosa are consequences of our com-

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mitment to defend th Philippines [1] This is an over simpli fication The compelling reason which made the United States stay on in Asia was the lure of trade with China and oth r Asian nations and not the commitment to defend the Philippines European nations had arrived in Asia before the United States and had carved out their little empires The United States did not want to lag behind others in establishing its sphere of influence Cloaked in phrases that spoke of moral obligations Washington declared its deter mination to keep China open to all those who wanted to enter In a note issued on July 3 1900 U S secretary of state Hay announced that the policy of the United States was to preserve Chinese territorial and administrative entity These words were the core of the open door policy that Washington advocated for China The United States came to look upon itself as the protector of China against the vicious schemes of European powers but it shared all the privileges that Europeans enjoyed in China under un equal treaties While the other foreign powers waged wars for these privileges the United States enjoyed them without fighting for them

Britain France and Japan waged wars in China the Russians occupied Chinese territories and the Germans acquired special privileges in China The open door policy advocated by the United States was meant not only to ensure trade but also to have political influence The United States developed an image of moral superiority over the *nasty imperialism and power politics of the Europeans* Ronald Steel the author of *Pax Americana* admits that though time and distance have embellished the open door policy with a mantle of disinterested generosity and most Americans view it as evidence of their concern for the wel fare of China the U S record is not so unblemished by acts of self service The open door declaration represent ed another episode in the long pillage of China at the hands

1 Louis Halle *Dream and Reality Aspects of American Foreign Policy* Harper and Row New York 1960 p 203

of Western powers—a pilla e whose frui s we enjoyed but responsibility for whi h we sought to avo d [2]

The success of its imperial adventures gave the United States a share of the trade with China and satisfied its national ego at a time wh n the idea of U S expansion as a world power—as the manifest destiny of the United States—was being discussed in Washington In 1900 the United States took part in quelling the Boxer uprising and the capture of Peking by China s imperial forces The United States had th sa isfaction that it was able to manipulate trade and have imperial adventures in Asia It obtained from China the right to station armed forces on Chinese soil and for U S vessels to cruise in Chinese waters.

A special relationship developed between the United States and China American teachers and missionaries in their hundreds went to China and set up secondary schools and churches Thousands of Chinese students went to American universities China became the unstated object of American ambitions [3] In the 1930s Japanese a gression against China angered the United States but Washington did not take any positive action to help China Then came the 1940s and the U S involvement in the second world war The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour brought about an open alliance between the United States and China President Roosevelt wanted to make China a great nation He had the notion which Churchill and Stalin dismissed as quixotic that China aided by Washington would rise from its ashes to the position of a great power and play a beneficial role after the war in bringing stability to Asia [4] During the war the United States helped to train and equip twenty Chinese divisions to

2 Ronald Steel *Pax Americana* Hamish Hamilton London 1968 p 126
3 Richard Harris *America and East Asia* Times Newspapers Ltd London 1968 p 26
4 Dean Acheson *Present at the Creation* Hamish Hamilton London 1970 p 8

oppose Japan and after the war it trained forty more divisions to oppose communists The United States became hopelessly involved in Asia The military occupation of Japan and the active interest and involvement in the civil war in China made the United States believe that it had a role to play in Asia a role which some of the European powers were giving up in the 1950s out of sheer exhaustion and as a result of pressures from nationalist forces in the region

When civil war was resumed in China soon after the second world war ended President Truman sent General Marshall on a mission of mediation between the communists led by Mao Tse tung and Chinese nationalists under Chiang Kai shek The United States hoped to have some kind of relationship with both The nationalists were happy to have U S assistance The communists were not unwilling to have an understanding with Washington[5] and welcomed U S diplomatic moves on China which has a sneaking admiration for the United States and there has always been an attempt both in the United States and China to find common links The traditional friendship between China and the United States notwithstanding Washington had to beat a hasty retreat from China The United States felt bitter that its role in the civil war in China was by and large a failure It had earlier—in July 1946—withdrawn from Philippines It was not a voluntary withdrawal because as *The New York Times* said editorially

5 When James Reston the correspondent of *The New York Times* went to Peking in 1971 Chou En lai told him that there was a very interesting photograph which showed Mao Tse tung entering Peking in a U S jeep and reviewing whole rows of U S guns and tanks captured from Chiang Kai shek s nationalist forces Chou told Reston You Americans were only three millions at the time of your revolution yet were able to resist a colonial power of 30 millions So you depended on guerilla warfare It was you who started guerilla warfare George Washington started it

it owed much to the sugar lobby s interest in imposing tight quotas on Philippine shipments

Soon after the second world war ended and before Mao Tse tung came to power the United States insisted much to the *annoyance of the other big powers* that China should be made a permanent member of the U N security council China is today a big power but it is not this China that the United States had encouraged and taken under its fostering wings It was the puppet Chinese regime in Taiwan that Washington seated in the U N council With the proclamation of the People s Republic of China on October 1 1949 the hopes that the United States had nourished in China for a century were dashed

Washington felt as if a close but junior partner had suddenly turned hostile It saw Mao Tse tung s China as a threat to peace in Asia and wanted to contain her Although there was no direct threat to U S interests it found justification for continued involvement in Asian affairs on the ground that there was a political vacuum in Asia that smaller nations required assistance to ward off the onslaught of what it called international communism and that Japan had to be helped to stand on her own feet At first Washington was reluctant to commit ground forces in Asia to maintain its position but soon U S forces were fighting Asians in Korea and Vietnam The United States used its army navy and air force against Asian nationalism. The U S Seventh Fleet with more than 130 vessels constituted a massive American presence in Asia The fleet was originally meant to protect Taiwan but it established its presence elsewhere also to frighten those whom the United States did not like—in 1962 in the Indian ocean to reassure India of U S support against China and in 1971 to brow beat India and give support to Pakistan The United States assumed the role of a protector making the East safe for the West keeping recalcitrant Asian nations in their places and containing communist ex pansionism in Asia

The justification for American involvement in the civil war which broke out in Korea in 1950 was that the war

was being fought by international communism to extend its hold in Asia and that China and the Soviet Union were behind north Korea General MacArthur s view that the Korean war should be widened until the Chinese were overthrown by a counter revolution supported by the United States was favoured by U S leaders The American objective was to destroy communism and get back to China The United States wanted the nations of the region not to fritter away their energies and resources in augmenting their armed forces but concentrate on economic development *It took over the responsibility for fighting* wars in Asia on behalf of client nations It was prepared to go to any length to support the nations who accepted the U S role in Asia During the Korean war in support of south Korea Washington publicly threatened and privately considered the use of nuclear weapons against north Korea At the time of Panmunjom talks for peace Eisenhower said he would use atomic weapons if the communists misbehaved Sherman Adams reports that the United States first moved atomic missiles to Okinawa in the spring of 1953 and in May of the same year Dulles informed Nehru that if a truce could not be arranged in Korea Washington could not be held responsible if it resorted to nuclear weapons [6]

The United States found excuses for intervention and tended to intervene against all radical and revolutionary movments because we are afraid lest they be taken over by communists [7] The checking of Chinese power became the main U S objective in Asia India became important to the United States and was given large economic assistance in the hope that she would not fall under Chinese domination but would become a counter balance to China The United States attempted with some success to drive a wedge between India and China but it did not realise that

6 Sherman Adams *First Hand Report The Eisenhower Years* Harper and Row New York 1961 pp 48-49
7 Hans J Morgenthau To Intervene or not to Intervene *Foreign Affairs* April 1967 p 433

there was no enthusiasm in India to be b wark against China. India had and even now has no fear of bein overrun by China. The lesson of half-a-century of c m munism in Europe and Asia is that nat on lism is as b a factor as communism in world po itics. Indeed communism in Asia has come to terms with nationalism.

The United States did not understand for a long while what communism was. It did not want to accept China as a communist State. Dean Rusk U S assistant secretary of state said in 1951 that China was a colonial Russian government. It is not the government of China. It does not pass the first test. It is not Chinese. Dean Rusk s words betrayed a certain faith that the Chinese were not a bad lot by themselves and that it was the vile Russian who had spoilt U S chances in China. The United States clung to the illusion of being a friend of China and saw a global conspiracy directed against its interests by Moscow. It considered the Sovi t Union a greater threat than China. Dean Acheson had pointed out that long before communism came Russians had aimed to dominate Asian peoples and that Washington should not deflect from the Russians to itself the righteous anger and hatred of the Chinese people. There has always been a strong pro-China lobby in Washington. But Mao Tse tung did not oblige this lobby. He directed his wrath against it also American presence in the Pacific became a serious threat to Peking and the formidable steps Washington took to protect Chiang Kai shek made Peking detest the United States.

The anti-China group in the United States became powerful after a curious band of generals missionaries businessmen and professional anti-communists assumed the power to shape U S policies towards Asia. Fear of China cultivated by these men at tremendous cost soon reached hysterical proportions. China became the epitome of evil. Senator McCarthy s activities painted China as a dangerous red dragon. The puppet government in Taiwan was recognised by the United States as the real government of China and given massive arms aid. American poli y in Asia became more and more unrealistic. The resounding U S

defeat in Korea made Washington withdraw into a shell for a while India wel omed the American defeat in Korea She did not approve of the American posture of a universal policeman of a super nation to whom smaller nations had to bow

But U S presence in Asia could not be wished away It became stronger after the Korean war In 1952 the United States signed a security pact with Japan permitting it to station armed forces in Japan It made a defence pact with Australia and New Zealand and another with the Philippines It also entered into an alliance with south Korea allowing Washington to station troops on Korean soil It developed the strategic concept of U S interests in south east south and west Asia In August 1954 in a joint resolution both the Houses of U S Congress declared The U S regards as vital to its national interests and to world peace the maintenance of international peace and security in south east Asia The resolution authoriz-d the U S President to take all measures necessary for the defence of south east Asia The biggest of the treaties the United States entered into in pursuit of this policy was the South East Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO) of 1955 The SEATO linking eight powers envisaged an elaborate set up for the protection of the Asian members of the pact but it had a predominantly Western context and member ship The United States Britain Australia New Zealand and France were members of the SEATO The only three Asian members were Pakistan Thailand and the Philip pines

India was apprehensive of the U S alliances and opposed them on the ground they would lead to political instability cultural and economic domination and border wars The Bandung conference of non aligned countries held in 1955 was a move initiated by India to canalise the resentment in Asia against the SEATO treaty India believed that the presence of the United States in Asia was a grave threat to peace because it had the power to sub vert the governments of smaller States set up puppet regimes and maintain them in power The Chinese would

perhaps like to export revolution but only to those countries where the people were prepared to receive it China s actions were not as insiduous as those of the United States which had its network of secret agents and military bases and limitless resources Even the U S aid programme for economic development led to political manipulation The presence of U S forces created tension and sparked off riots in Asia Washington argued however that the American presence on allied soils generally achieves its primary objective it provides a sense of security 8

Most Asian nations have had longer periods of peace and stability than Europe and America More than the inherent Asian jealousies it was the Western sponsored military alliance that disturbed the stability of the region The United States wanted to create its own balance of power and tried to make the small nations of Asia believe that without U S support they would become pawns in the power game of the Soviet Union and China It believed that the American presence alone provided the cement ing common link in this fragmented region [9] and warned that if it pulled out of Asia disunity weakness and in security would follow

In west Asia India opposed U S policies except during a brief period when Britain France and Israel attacked Suez canal area in 1956 New Delhi s policy on west Asia had its contradictions With the theocratic Muslim State of Pakistan posing a serious threat to India it would have appeared natural for India not to support the Arab cause but India was a secular State and her policies were not based on religious considerations She supported the Arab cause because she felt that the Arabs who were the have nots and oppressed in west Asia were being exploited by the big powers, particularly the United States

The Eisenhower doctrine announced by the U S

8 Fred Greene *U.S Policy and the Security of Asia* McGraw Hill Book Co New York 1968 p 154
9 *ibid* p 62

President on January 5 1957 declared that the United States would have to intervene militarily in west Asia to fill the power vacuum in the region with a view to meeting any possibl communist subversion India rejected the suggestion that there was any threat of Soviet subversion in west Asia Nehru said that whatever power vacuum that existed in west Asia should be filled by the strength and progress of the countries of the region He added that any attempt by outside powers to fill the so called power vacuum was fraught with the gravest danger to the peace of the world He reiterated his opposition to the U S attitude towards west Asia in a joint statement he and Syria s President Kuwatly issued on January 27 1957 The statement said that the problems of west Asia can only be solved by the countries of the region and a military approach to problems of this area will only serve to create further disharmony and instability besides contributing to the heightening of tension and endangering world peace It added that the Baghdad pact has caused bitter conflicts and divisions in the Arab world and has greatly increased international tension

Nehru criticised more explicitly the Eisenhower doctrine and its implications in the Lok Sabha in March 1957 He said that the assumption that the United States had to step in and fill the power vacuum was dangerous Under the impact of this doctrine a series of dramatic changes took place in west Asia When the relations between Syria and Turkey (a Baghdad pact country) became strained and the latter massed troops on its border with the former the United States supported Turkey The fear that Soviet influence might increase in Syria and Egypt both of which received Soviet aid made Washington give military aid to Turkey and Israel The United States put pressure on Jordon (another Baghdad pact country) which was unstable and uncertain of its future It gave $10 million aid to Jordon The U S sixth fleet moved into the eastern Mediterranean to support Jordon The tension in west Asia was heightened as a result of all this. Mean while Egypt and Syria merged to form the United Arab

Republic in the hope that after the merger they would be able to withstand the threat from Israel and Turkey

In 1958 a military coup took place in Iraq and General Kassim became the prime minister He snapped Iraq s ties with the Baghdad pact and proclaimed his belief in non alignment As Baghdad repudiated the Baghdad pact the pact was renamed CENTO There was an internal crisis in Lebanon also In support of pro American elements there U S marines landed in Lebanon At the same time British forces landed in Jordon The United States feared that the whole of west Asia might become communist Eisenhower wrote to Nehru in July 1958 explaining the basis of the U S action in landing marines in Lebanon and pledging his readiness to withdraw the forces from Lebanon as soon as the United Nations could act Nehru had ex pressed distress at the developments and requested Eisen hower to withdraw the U S forces In a speech in the Lok Sabha he strongly cri icised the U S action which he said had taken the world to the brink of another global war When Khruschev suggested that a summit meeting of the heads of governments of the Soviet Union the United States Britain France and India be held to settle the west Asian crisis the United States and even Britain ex pressed their reluctance to have India at the summit The Soviet Union thereupon dropped the idea of the summit and asked for an emergency session of the U N general assembly to discuss the withdrawal of U S troops from Lebanon and British troops from Jordon The crisis in west Asia showed that the United States did not want to recognise India as a great power and was suspicious of her attitude

India believed that most of the border wars that had erupted in Asia were encouraged by Washington There was U S involvement in the wars between Arabs and Jews north Korea and south Korea north Vietnam and south Vietnam Cambodia and Thailand Malaysia and Indonesia and India and Pakistan All the wars that Washington has fou ht in the last two decades have been in Asia—in west Asia in Korea and in Vietnam And U S

allies like Pakistan have waged wars against neighbours under the protection of U S alliances In the Korean war the United States was the principal party In Vietnam U S interference in Asian affairs reached its climax

India s attitude towards U S actions in Asia has been *uniformly critical India complained that the U S sponsor* ed SEATO wanted to establish a sort of hegemony in south east Asia and suppress the will of the people of the area *The U S obligation under the SEATO pact was only* in respect of aggression by communist powers But under cover of this pact many unpopular causes including the activities of the rebel forces against Indonesia in 1957 were supported by Washington The United States threa tened to give recognition to the rebel government of Celebes because Sukarno s Indonesia was not willing to toe the U S line It also took a most unhelpful attitude towards the solution of the dispute about the future of west Irian between Indonesia and Holland through U N mediation Nehru criticised the U S abstention from the voting in the U N general assembly on this issue

Another flash point in east Asia was Taiwan In 1955 *after a retaliatory bombardment from China of Quemoy* and Matsu two off shore islands belonging to Taiwan the U S Congress authorised President Eisenhower to employ the armed forces of the United States as he deemed it necessary After the general U S support the Taiwan Government strengthened its garrison in Quemoy and Matsu and conducted raids with U S assistance in the mainland waters of China U S spies were sent to main land China from Taiwan This was a provocative situation for which New Delhi pinned the responsibility on the United States

For nearly twenty years from 1950 to 1970 there was hardly any change in the American policy in Asia When *the war in Vietnam led to nation wide protests and violence* in the United States and created a weariness in the Ameri can mind the United States began to grope for a policy that would enable it to disengage from Vietnam It found that unremitting hostility towards China or for that matter

the Soviet Union was not pragmatic and it slowly but cautiously unwound its old policy A detente with Moscow or Peking was essential before the United States could disengage itself from Vietnam Washington found that it had more to offer China than the Soviet Union China also had more to gain from Washington than from Moscow The policy planners in Washington decided that a detente with Peking would be an honourable prelude to the withdrawal of the United States from Vietnam China was also willing to patch up with the United States for the two-decade old confrontation with the United States and the formidable presence of the U S naval force poised against her belly had created a weariness in the Chinese mind China had taken the initiative in opening a dialogue with the United States This fact together with the rivalry between Moscow and Peking gave Washington the psychological setting for the breakthrough in its policy on Asia

Even as far back as 1960 Chou En lai had told Edgar Snow the U S writer We believe that a solution to Sino U S relations would ultimately be found It is only a question of time But there is one point If the United States does not give up its policy of aggression and threat of war against China no solution is possible We do not believe that the people of the United States would allow their government indefinitely to pursue such a policy The United States had remained separated from China by two decades of isolation and hatred In his search for new frontiers of peace and understanding in the world President Kennedy had recognized the importance of China and had wanted a detente with her But his preoccupation with the Soviet Union and he Cuban affair and his short term at the White House had not given him time to pursue his goals in China

By the time Nixon came to power a new initiative in Asia had become imperative Though Nixon had earlier indulged in witch hunting communists he recognised the realities of the U S weakness in Asia For the sake of saving face for disengaging from the disastrous war with north Vietnam and for creating a counter weight to the

Soviet Union he required the friendship of China In his report to the U S Congress in February 1972 he spoke of the profound significance for future generations of his decision to go to China The equation that was often made in the past in the speeches of U S leaders about the world s largest democracy (India) and the world s most powerful democracy (the United States) was substituted by Nixon by a new one between the world s most powerful nation (the United States) and the world s most populous nation (China) He discovered that China and the United States shared many parallel interests and could do much to enrich the lives of the two peoples He said that it was not an accident that the Chinese people had such a long history of friendship with the United States

The main thrust of the U S policy in Asia in the 1970s is to seek accommodation with China balance the power of the Soviet Union and Japan and maintain a dominant role for the United States Washington believes that in Asia in the decade ahead there would be a quadrilateral balance hinged on the United States the Soviet Union China and Japan At the 1973 annual conference of the London based International Institute for Strategic Studies George Bull a former U S under secretary of state said that he did not see India moving into first power status not merely be cause of her present poverty but also because the com mercial role of overseas Indians is likely to build up resent *ments in other poor nations—as Burma demostrated several* years ago and Uganda is making evident now Although Nixon declared that the task of peace in Asia absolutely requires the maintenance of the allied strength of the non communist world he sacrificed the interests of the so called non communist world particularly Japan and India when he initiated his dialogue with Peking in February 1972 At one time it was Washington s deep concern for Pakistan that had kept India low in U S priorities and now it was Washington s desire to edge towards China that made India a secondary concern

The joint communique issued in February 1972 at the end of Nixon s visit to China referred to the war between

India and Pakistan and offered gratuitous advice on the steps to insure peace The communique said that the United States favoured a continuation of the ceasefire between India and Pakistan and withdrawal of all military forces to within their own territories and to their own sides of the ceasefire line in Jammu and Kashmir The communique also said that the Chinese firmly maintained that India and Pakistan should immediately withdraw all their forces to their own respective territories and to their own side of the ceasefire line in Jammu and Kashmir China supported the Pakistan Government and people in their struggle to preserve their independence and sovereignty and the people of Jammu and Kashmir in their struggle for the right of self-determination

The reference to the ceasefire line and independence of Kashmir was considered by New Delhi as an interference in the internal affairs of India Indira Gandhi protested against it and said that if the talks were meant to forge some sort of a new power group India though a small nation will not be bound by any such decision which seeks to dictate terms to Asian countries Swaran Singh specifically attacked Washington He said it was unfortunate that the United States should have acquiesced to a reference being made to Jammu and Kashmir in the communique China obviously used stronger language and was more caustic in her reference to India but New Delhi did not express any surprise Although Washington had reservations about some of the other points mentioned in the joint communique there seemed to have been none regarding the reference to Kashmir

India was not perturbed over the effusion of U.S friendship for Peking In both the United States and Europe there was a great resurgence of interest in the present as well as the past attitudes and achievements of the Chinese people This was understandable although there was no such phenomenon in Asia What amused India was the sudden and what appeared to be the amateurish admiration in the United States for the Chinese U S interest in China was so great that what the Chinese delegation to the United

Nations ate for breakfast became big news *The Times* London reported that the head waiter in the hotel in New York where the Chinese delegation stayed started some thing of a debate on etiquette when he disclosed that the Chinese folded their napkins neatly after they had finished eating 10 The Press in the United States noted that for breakfast three of the six members of the delegation had scrambled eggs and the others had eggs and bacon and that they paid with a $100 note and tipped generously Their request for large mugs for brewing tea was disclosed to the nation in television news bulletins within hours The diffi culty in acquiring Chinese flags whose manufacture became a booming industry in New York attracted newspaper re porters for days New Delhi thought that the appetite for news on eggs tips and mugs was at the expense of deeper understaning on basic issues It was nostalgically recalled in Washington that the day Nixon arrived in Peking marked the anniversary of the sailing 186 years earlier of the *Empress of China* the first ship to carry the American flag and American goods to China The Chinese did not dis appoint the Americans in their admiration for the United States Miss Chiang Ching wife of chairman Mao Tse tung told the conductor of the Philadelphia Orchestra which per formed in Peking in 1973 that China was deeply stirred by the United States She said Thanks for everything We are old friends You supported the Chinese people in the 1940s We do not forget our friends

U S observers claimed that Nixon and Chou En lai had agreed to work for a detente in Asia Nixon even claimed that the week he was in Peking was the week that changed the world 11 What was the nature of the change ? The China U S accord did not solve Asia s problems Of course it allowed American boys to go home and not become the sacrificial goats of a power hungry clique in Washington It put an end to the two decade old agony of the Viet namese people The U S dialogue with China also helped

10 *The Times* London November 17 1971
11 *The Times of India* January 28 1973

the United States to have a freer hand in Asia Even the demand persistently made by Peking in the past for U S withdrawal from Taiwan was not pressed When the Vietnam peace treaty was signed in January 1973 Chinese leaders were believed to have cautioned the United States against any hasty reduction of its forces in Asia China was also in favour of U S presence in Europe The most amusing but surprising reaction from China was that the Chinese Press considered the continued existence of a strong NATO the U S backed military alliance in Europe to be important[12] As for China she acquired greater latitude for her activities without fear of military attacks from the United States and with some amount of psychological protection against possible Soviet attacks She could attack and occupy Parcel islands belonging to south Vietnam without even a murmur of protest from any source

The detente with China however did not give the United States the right to dictate policies to other Asian nations and order their lives It did not end the aggressive U S presence in Asia It was after the detente came into being that the U S navy expanded its operations in the Indian ocean Although the United States returned Okinawa to Japan in 1973 it began to build a new base in the sparsely inhabited Pacific island of Micronesia conquered from Japan in the second world war and assigned to the United States trusteeship by the United Nations Apart from the commitments the United States has made in Indo China its post Vietnam residual commitments include the military pacts with Japan the Philippines Taiwan south Korea, the SEATO and the ANSUS The U S military support behind these commitments consists of the U S troops in Korea forty U S bases and facilities in Japan U S air force facilities in Taiwan the Seventh Fleet and bases in Thailand Philippines and a series of support facilities in the Pacific ocean and the Diego Garcia base in the Indian ocean

India has taken a positive stand on the Indian ocean

12. *The Times* London February 27 1973

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and has declared that she would not like any power to have a commanding role She is not against the presence of the United States or th Soviet Union in Asia as traders and as equal partners with the countries of the region She is not against the United States But she is against any move from any quarter that would compromise her freedom and expose her to the threat of war India feels that the U S understanding with Peking cannot bind the rest of Asia nor can it curb the initiative of other Asian nations Asia is not China It is Japan Indonesia India Pakistan and all the other nations that go to make the vast conti nent What the countries of Asia need most are peace and stability which can come only when outside interference in their affairs ends when foreign military umbrellas and foreign troops are withdrawn The realities of the Asian scene are nationalism and opposition to foreign interference As a counterpoise to the military alliance sponsored by the United States in the 1950s the non aligned nations had formed an alliance for peace in Bandung in 1954 It worked well for a while but it could not shut out the powerful U S influence from Asia Today two decades after the Bandung conference there is much less unity and solidarity among Asian nations than there was in 1954

In January 1972 Indira Gandhi said that the time had come when the people of Asia must wake up to their destiny and Heritage and—no matter what the hatred and bitterness of the past might have been—work in co operation so that the continent could regain its status in the world The time is ripe for a new Bandung type conference a new alliance based on economic co operation and total opposi tion to foreign intervention New Delhi has said that the best guarantee against subversive pressure from outside is progressive nationalism and economic development It has defined *progressive nationalism* as nationalism not in the narrow chauvinistic sense but in its true spirit of patriotism reflected in popular governments which fulfil the aspirations of the people India envisages a political system in which there is no place for dictators who could be propped by foreign assistance

India denies that she has any desire to be a dominant power and has stated that she has no political ambitions or geo-political designs in Asia Indira Gandhi has even said India does not want to be a power let alone a nuclear or dominant power 13 Such self effacement and modesty may be suspect in the eyes of India s neighbours but the fact is what India wants is that the sovereignty independence and territorial integrity of the countries of the region be guaranteed if necessary through an international agreement and foreign interference especially U S interference be put an end to In the eight point summation of conclusions reached at a conference of twenty-eight Indian ambassadors in east south-east and south Asia held in New Delhi in April 1972 India declared that her role in this region was one of mutual co operation based on equality and partnership She has made cautious moves to get closer to Japan and some other Asian countries and has continued her efforts to reach an understanding with China She has moved closer to north Vietnam Australia Afghanistan Iraq and even to Iran thanks to Indira Gandhi s political acumen

Japan which has been under U S tutelage for two decades is as much opposed to U S interference as India Her wish to break away from the United States is a natural desire to escape from the cloying exclusiveness of the American tie from the helpless passivity it seems to imply 14 After Kakui Tanaka became prime minister in July 1972 Japan moved closer to China in a bid to forestall U S moves in Asia Tanaka did not go to Washington to meet the American President as previous Japanese prime ministers had done *Nixon went to Hawaii to meet him* Japan s status as a growing economic giant and rival to the United States is a cause of deep concern to Washington which is alarmed by the staggering U S trade deficit with Japan a third of whose exports go to the United States

13 In a leading article India Today and Tomorrow in *Sainik Samachar* annual number 1973

14 George Kennan *Foreign Affairs* October 1961 p 22

Japan would like to make friends not only with China but also with India Taisaku Kojima Japan s ambassador in India said in New Delhi in August 1972 that Japan wanted to be a friend and partner of India and that there was need for very strong tie between the two countries He said that for long both Japan and India had been leaning heavily on the West and in the process of westernisation they had forgotten their old ties Only one thousand years ago the Japanese people knew of only two countries namely India and China But then came the go West era and we forgot our immediate neighbours The same process guided the Indian foreign policy and see where we are today We even forgot that it was India which had given us our religion

India cannot hope to gain any special position in Asia on the basis of the religion she had given centuries ago to some of the countries of Asia including Japan and China She can only gain the trust and confidence of others by having to offer something new something that the others want maybe trade maybe even arms if India has arms to spare Peace in Asia can be assured and all intervention including that of the United States can be ended if India China and Japan could work together But among these countries the rancour is so deep and suspicion so intense that such an understanding cannot come for a long time The alternative is bilateral co operation which will reinforce a multilateral approach to regional problems[15] and an understanding among the major countries of Asia to have homogeneous regional groupings which could be linked together on the basis of certain minimum common objectives

In the past many attempts have been made to have regional groupings in Asia The ECAFE the Colombo Plan and the Asian Development Bank are regional groupings with economic objectives and with outside support and

15 Indira Gandhi while welcoming the Laotian Prime Minister Prince Souvanna Phouma in New Delhi on January 28 1973 said she would welcome bilateral understanding

inspiration India co operated with these bodies in the hope that they would strengthen Asia Among the other smaller regional groupings are (1) the Association of South East Asia (ASEA) formed in 1951 (2) Maphilindo formed in 1963 and (3) the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) formed in 1967

Japan has shown interest in the various groupings and is now taking great interest in Asian affairs The visit of Y B Chavan to Tokyo in October 1972 to explore the possibilities of closer economic relationship between the two countries and Swaran Singh s visit in December 1972 showed that India and Japan would like to get closer India has the potential to be the nucleus of a grouping in Asia But she has not been able to consolidate her internal strength and inspire confidence in the other countries of the region In the 1960s what stood in the way of her becoming more effective was her military defeat in 1962 The balance was tilted in favour of China and the nations of the region looked to Peking rather than to New Delhi After India s success in championing the cause of Bangladesh independence in the teeth of stiff opposition from the United States and China and defeating Pakistan in December 1971 she regained some of her lost self confidence and ability to give a lead to the other nations of the region to unite against foreign pressures India is the centre of south Asia but she did not establish security alliances with neighbours or with the West because she feared that any move to form alliances would make her unpopular and lead other nations to suspect her of imperialistic motives She however aspired to be a leader especially of the non aligned nations in Asia The emergence of China as a counterforce and not as an ally of India upset many of New Delhi s calculations There is no need to hide the fact that India is afraid of China politically and militarily

It would be idealistic to talk of the unity and solidarity of all the countries of Asia But India has to recognise that based on language culture history and political development there are groups and divisions in Asia and many more countries look towards Peking than towards New

Delhi Asia does not exist as a homogeneous whole When New Delhi talks of Asian nationalism there is lack of response because apart from other differences emotionally and ethnically Asia is diverse China Japan Korea and Vietnam form one group Malaysia the Philippines Singapore and Indonesia fall into another Laos Cambodia and Thailand form part of yet another group In the west are the Arab nations

India is the nucleus of yet another group If India Pakistan Afghanistan Bangadesh Nepal Burma and Ceylon could form a unit and work together there is a chance that the region may have political stability and accelerated economic development A prosperous and peaceful Asia cannot emerge on the basis of U S sponsored alliances But the attitude of the United States is important because over a period of years it has acquired a certain role in Asia The United State will have to withdraw militarily but can lend its financial support to the Asian alliances in its own interest It has to evolve a new poli-y towards Asia—not only towards China It should be a policy which would infuse confidence in U S professions The image of the United States in Asia is not uniformly good although some nations welcome the U S role as an aid giver This image is on the whole sullied by the blood of millions of Asians killed by U S bombs and the millions of dollars that have been spent for subversion of political and economic systems unpalatable to Washington The United States has to demonstrate its concern for peace in Asia and shed its big brother attitude before nations like India can put their trust in it

The fact that the American presence has ended in Vietnam does not infuse confidence in the U S declaration of good intentions in Asia United States realised too late that its real enemy in Asia was not communism but militant nationalism It refused to recognise the emergence of Asia as a powerful force on the world scene and of the obsolescence of the role of Western nations as peace keepers in Asia When Christopher Mayhew a British observer had suggested to Ho Chi Minh in 1954 that the West had a peace-keeping role in Asia he replied Suppose we Vietnamese—

together with Indians—proposed ourselves for a peace-keepin, role in Europe what would you Europeans think ?

When President Johnson or Nixon spoke of saving Asia there was a divorce between words and deeds Nixon had declared that U S soldiers were sent to Vietnam not for conquering North Vietnam but for the most selfless pur pose that any nation has ever fought a war for He said It was very simply to prevent the imposition by force of a communist governm nt on th 17 million people of south Vietnam That wa our goal and we achieved that goal and we can be proud that we stuck it out until we had reached that goal Nixon s definition of U S aims in Vietnam was as difficult to comprehend as President Ford s idea of trying to clutch at the unwilling hand of the Chinese leaders

India welcomed peace in Vietnam but did not accept Wash ngton s justification for going to war or its account of the reasons for withdrawing from South Vietnam All that India saw was that the U S military promiscuity in Vietnam had rained death and destruction on a tiny Asian country trying to assert its independence And during the celebrated American decade in Vietnam 950 000 north Viet-namese and Viet Cong men 190 000 south Vietnemese troops 415 000 south Vietnemese civilians and 55 000 U S soldiers had lost their lives Indira Gandhi described the situation in Vietnam as a classic example of old colonialism yielding place to new intervention After praising the courageous Vietnemese resistence to the world s mightiest power she wondered whether there could be a more glorious exam ple of the immortality of the human spirit. India s criti-cism of the big brother attitude adopted by the United States in Asia and its interventionist policies has been con sistent because India recognises the dangers of U S inter-vention in the internal affairs of Asian countries

8

AID AND POLITICS

ECONOMIC and military aid has played a major role in the formulation of U S foreign policy In fact it has been an instrument of foreign policy which successive administrations in the last three decades have made good use of to manipulate world events As Kissinger has stated aid has taken the form of intervention and by the claims of those who rely on the impact of economic evolution a kind of political manipulation [1] During and immediately after the second world war the United States through judicious use of aid prepared the groundwork for the post war economic empire at the expense of Europe particularly Britain which was forced to dismantle the imperial preference system The programme of aid despite its humanitarian overtones sought to lay the basis for the integration of much of the world s economy on American terms and for the construction of a system of societies open to political manipulation and to the pressures of free enterprise *The economic justification for aid was neatly dovetailed* into the humanitarian and strategic aspects

Aid is a source of embarrassment to the recipients who *do not want to recognise the inevitable strings behind it* It has had a major influence on the course of U S relations with India It has conditioned India s response to world events though perhaps New Delhi would not like

1 Kissinger *The Necessity for Choice* Harper and Bros New York 1960 p 319

to admit it India has climbed down clumsily often and on rare occasions with daring double steps from the old cloud nest to the hard cynical surfaces below As a posture as a matter of impeccable protocol India has castigated arms aid but has approved of economic aid without political strings behind it Beneath this protocol however the country s foreign policy apparatus has consistently grappled with the almost unchanging reality of the political tag on aid Not one bit of aid has flowed into any needy country on currents of altruism and India s policy evolution has been the slow embarrassed oft n painful at times shamefaced but on the whole commonsense adjustment to the fact of political pressure She has learned to use these pressures to her advantage to make this adjustment an act of positive statesmanship

The second world war and its aftermath gave a tremendous sales opportunity to th United States an opportunity to change its earlier inward looking policy It sought more markets and more influence aboard The developments in the field of electronics gave the U S industrial complex the necessary dynamism to acquire new markets The liaison between this industrial complex and the Pentagon soon made the United States look not only for markets and influence but also for domination of other societies Aid was one way of achieving this objective The United States started its foreign aid programme when war torn Europe was limping back to peace after the econd world war Unlike its allies the United States was more prosperous at the end of the war than when it began During the war its industrial production had quadrupled The war boosted its e onomy The United States was in a position to help war torn Europe which needed food and clothing apart from monetary assistance to reconstruct its shattered economy

The first U S aid programme in Europe had however no relation to these basic need it was meant to support a corrupt Greek government to fight communist revolutionaries In March 1947 after Britain discontinued aid to the Greek Government President Truman gave a

million aid to Greece to continue the war against the revolutionaries He also gave $1 million as aid to Turkey to fight nationalist insurgents He enunciated what came *to be known as the Truman doctrine of aid by declaring* that it was the U S policy to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures As an outcome of this doctrine of aid in 1947 the United States launched the Marshall Plan under the inspiration of George Marshall the secretary of state with the avowed purpose of countering communist threat to western Europe Truman received the approval of the U S Congress to give huge sums of money as military and economic aid to Europe The aid excluding military aid amounted to the enormous sum of about $30 billion (about Rs 15 000 crores) more than two thirds of which were given as outright grants The U S policy of aid aimed at containing communism was extended to those countries outside Europe which Washington considered vulnerable to communist attack

In his inaugural address on January 29 1949 Truman enumerated a number of economic programmes and referring to the fourth programme he said Fourth We must embark on a bold new programme of making the benefits of our scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of under developed areas Under the point four programme Washington initially gave only limited aid to developing countries because it had made heavy commitments of aid to Europe Turkey and China Those were the days when the United States counted on the co operation of nationalist China in making the Pacific safe for U S trade When Mao Tse tung came to power U S attitude towards aid to developing countries in Asia changed Washington gave aid to all those whom it thought could be set up against *the Soviet Union and China After the Korean war it* entered into military pacts with Asian countries and gave military and economic aid to Turkey Iran Pakistan Korea and Taiwan India refused to take military aid but *accepted economic assistance, The rationale behind U S*

economic aid to developing countries like India was that aid would diminish communist threat of subversion and strengthen the internal political structures of the countries

American aid to India began with a shipment of food in 1951 India s request to Washington for aid to meet the grave food situation in 1950 51 was debated by the United States for a long while before it was granted The U S Congress finally passed the India Emergency Food Act which enabled New Delhi to buy food on a long term basis for $190 million The amount represented only sixty per cent of her original request The forty per cent cut as Chester Bowles said later was the result of U S displea sure over India s reaction to the Korean war and Nehru s support to China s admission to the United Nations Bowles said that the United States was also sharply critical of India s mediation efforts in Korea He wrote that instead of generous wholehearted co operation Indians found themselves the target of attacks and criticism demands that if they wanted help from us they must throw their support behind us in the cold war [2]

President Truman s policy of containing communism by giving military and economic aid to non communist count ries was consolidated and strengthened during President Eisenhower s time under the able direction of John Foster Dulles the secretary of state The fight against communism was carried by Dulles to the borders of the Soviet Union and China by forming military alliances with all the countries which were prepared to join him in his crusade against communism Pakistan was one of the countries which gladly walked into the U S sponsored military pacts and took arms aid from the United States India criticised the U S aid to Pakistan which she believed took the aid only to fight India and not communism

Despite the differences over aid U S economic assis tance continued to be given to India Washington could not ignore India s geographical position size the nature

2 Chester Bowles *Ambassador s Report* Harper & Bros, New York 1974 pp 230-231

of her government and institutions There was a vague but natural sympathy in the United States for India Washington wanted to build India as a show piece of economic development under a democratic set up in contrast to the communist system of economic development in China Beneath this protocol of containing communism lay the gross bonds that enslaved the Indian consumer the pipe lines of crude economic exploitation and the ultimate corruption of the people s tastes and values

In the la t two decades India has received U S economic assistance totalling Rs 7 425 crores[3] In the preface to Fact Sheet No 23 published in 1971 by the U S Information Services in India ambassador Kenneth Keating said that U S aid totals nearly $9 900 million making India the top partner of the United States in its worldwide foreign assistance programme He further said that the U S share of the foreign assistance received by India was fifty six per cent These are impressive figures although on per capita basis the assistance received by India remains low U S aid to India works out to $0 86 per capita It is $1 60 per capita for Pakistan and $65 08 for Israel

New Delhi has been on the defensive about taking U S aid because a strong section of public opinion has questioned the wisdom of receiving U S aid The United States has sponsored genuine inquiry into many aspects of man s social cultural and scientific problems and has helped many developing countries to revamp their economy in directions which are not always desirable from the point of self generating aid or even development aid In the eyes of many foreign observers all this effort is blurred by the U S desire to have more and bigger material benefits

3 Thi was made up of four categories of aid loans repayable in dollars (33 8%) loans repayable in rupees convertible into dollars at U S Government s option (4 4%) loans repayable in rupees or dollars at India s option Cooley Fund loans to private enterprises which account for one fifth of all aid to India and amounts under PL-480 (42 2%) and grants (19 6%)

and advantages even at the cost of the welfare of others Mahatma Gandhi had written in 1942 We know what American aid means It amounts in the end to American influence if not American rule added to the British 4 Nehru had spoken of aid with suspicion He said the United States had not taken the trouble to annex a country as Britain annexed India but all their interest is in profit He said through the control of wealth it was easy enough to control the people of the country and indeed the land itself This ingenious method is called economic imperialism 5

Nehru was however helpless in fighting against the massive thrust of this invisible empire with its zeal to maximise material advantage even out of foreign aid Although he distrusted U S economic deals he realised that a developing country like India could not do without foreign aid

In the 1950s India had to swallow her pride and deflect from her declared position so as to accommodate American views on aid India was not happy over U S aid programmes In 1954 Nehru told the annual general meeting of the Federation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry that real progress for us will depend on the progress we make ourselves I fear progress does not come if we go about on crutches all the time 6

Even when Kennedy was the American President the restrictive nature of aid did not change The committee appointed by him to examine aid programmes was opposed to aid which would not yield private profit Most of the changes it proposed were intended to promote American private investment 7

During his term of office the different aid-giving

4 *Harijan* April 26 194[illegible]
5 Jawaharlal Nehru *Glimpses of World History* L. Drumond 19 9 p 570
6 *The Hindu* March 7 1954
7 Arthur M Schlesinger Jr *A Thousand Days* Houghton Mifflin Company Boston 1965, pp 593 5[illegible]9

agencies[8] were unified under the Agency for International Development (AID) and Washington made an attempt to redefine the objective of aid In an article published in the April 1961 issue of *Foreign Affairs* J K Galbraith urged that aid should help education social justice public administration and planning Kennedy himself said To those people in the huts and villages of half the globe struggling to break the bonds of mass misery we pledge our best efforts to help them to help themselves for whatever period is r quired not because the communists may be doing it not because we seek their votes but because this is right He brought into being the Peace Corps an example of mis placed enthusiasm under which a large number of U S boys and girls worked alongside Indians in remote villages in India It brought the United States some goodwill and gave the members of the Peace Corps some bit of education but it did not improve conditions in India or relations between India and the U S

Although Kennedy s proposal to declare the 1960s as the development decade was ac epted by the United Nations aid funds showed a downward trend in the U S budgets in the 1960s Johnson and Nixon also made high sounding promises about aid The Perkins committee appointed by President Johnson to examine aid programmes said that the United States ought to try to help poor countries and poor people improve their lot President Nixon thought that there was a moral quality in this nation that will not permit us to close our eye to the wants in this world He said there were sound practical reasons for our foreign aid programmes Despite the high idealism and rhetoric of su cessive U S President about

8 Some of the agencies were the Economic Co operation Administration (ECA) of 1948 51 the Mutual Security Administration of 1951 the Foreign Operations Administration of 1953 the Industrial Co-operative Administration of 1955 Earlier there were the Point Four Programme and the Technical Co operation Mission (TCM)

bridging the gulf between the rich and the poor nations U S economic aid appropriations continued to be more restrictive in nature and never reached the level of 1949 when it was $8 1 billion three quarters of which went to Europe It dropped to $2 billion in fiscal year 1972 It was raised to $3 9 billion in 1973 It dropped to $1 9 billion in 1974

U S administration has tried to tell the American people and Congress that foreign aid is in the best interests of the United States This confession of self interest was taken by Europe as a justification for not repaying loans even in gratitude Indeed the European countries which benefited most from U S grants in aid were those that conspicuously failed to support the United States It was the commercial aspect of aid which has made the aid receiving countries sore Washington was not able to hide this aspect U S administrators openly admitted that foreign aid boosted trade Some of them testified before U S Congressional committees that if aid were reduced it would decrease U S exports and employment and hurt the prosperity and welfare of the United States On June 11 1961 before the House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs Douglas Dhillons the secretary of the treasury under Kennedy said that foreign aid was accompained by the outflow of American exports

David Bell who gave stability and purpose to the aid programmes and stayed longer than anyone else as U S AID administrator said in a speech in Pittsburg on October 23 1963 that the U S foreign assistance programme had a major effect in financing U S exports of goods and services and a relatively small and declining effect on the U S balance of payments deficit Foreign aid today in over whelming degree takes the form of U S goods and services—not U S dollars—going out to help the underdeveloped countries And in the process according to a private plan ning group s estimate American assistance to the develop ing countries is responsible for at least several hundred thousand American jobs.'[9] Five years later William S

9 *The New York Times* October 24 1963

Gaud the chief of U S AID under President Johnson said that ninety three per cent of AID funds are spent directly in the United States to pay for U S equipment U S raw *materials U S expert services and U S food given to* developing countries as aid He said that the biggest single misconception about foreign aid is that we send money abroad [10]

Aid under PL-480 is a good example of how a sound commercial proposition that helps domestic groups is called foreign aid The desire of U S farmers and Congressmen to get rid of agricultural surpluses coincided with the desire of Washington to transfer resources to less developed countries [11] The food received by India under PL 480 was at the high subsidised prices in the protected U S market which was higher than the prices at which it could be bought from the international market No concession was shown to India in the matter of prices and the food had to be shipped in U S ships for which India had to pay in dollars Gunnar Myrdal says that it would be more realistic to call PL-480 food aid as American national agricultural aid instead of as foreign aid [12]

The crusade against communism apart from being a crusade to contain the political and economic influence of the Soviet Union and China was meant to defeat nationalist movements that sought to free nations from a system dominated by American capital It also wanted to work against indigenous efforts for using nation s own resources for their social and economic development. In short the objective was to make it safe for U S companies to operate and carry away a part of the national wealth of the third world This is more evident in the case of Latin America

10 William S Gaud Foreign aid what it is how it works why we provide it *Department of State Bulletin* Vol LIX No 1537 *(December 9 1968) p 603*

11 David A Baldwin *Foreign Aid and American Foreign Policy* Frederick A Praeger New York 1968 p 117

12 Gunnar Myrdal *Challenge of World Poverty* Penguin Books Ltd London 1970 p 341

a traditional preserve of the United States where a heavy proportion of U S aid went to military regimes which had overthrown constitutional governments Towards the end of the 1960 with almost half of the population in Latin America under military rule a significant portion of the aid went not to assist free men and free governments but to hold in power regimes to which the people had lost their freedom 13 American corporations and their multi national subsidiaries control 70 to 90 per cent of the raw material resources of Latin America and more than 60 per cent of its industrial plant Its public utilities its banking comm rcial and foreign trade relation hips are in the hands of U S corporations or their subsidiaries 14

The commercial aspect of aid and the control the United States sought to have worried India But she could not do away with U S economic assistance in the 1960s even though she had to pay a high rate of interest to the United States on loans received under the aid programmes Most of the aid to Europe in the 1950s was in the shape of grants and for the loans given to Europe the rate of interest charged by Washington was low But in the case of the aid to India and other developing countries most of it was given in the form of loans justified by Washington on the ground that loans would encourage better financial discipline Loans were given at 5 per cent interest with short amortisation periods and as a consequence the growth rate of some of the developing countries were adversely affected resulting in greater outflow than inflow of capital The net flow of capital into the United States from the developing countries between 1950 and 1965 as a result of its direct foreign investment was $16 000 million During the same period foreign investors as a whole

13 Simon Hanson *Five Years of the Alliance for Progress* Inter American FAS Press Washington D C 1967 p 1

14 Frederick Clairmonte *Latin America Meditations from Afar* Stockholm University Institute for National Economic Studies 1970 quoted by Noam Chomsky in *At War with Asia*

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(including British) took out of the general currency reserve of India nearly three times as much as they contributed directly 15

Aid has been often tied to the purchase of goods and services from the United States It is true says Vadilal Dagli in *Two Decades of Indo-U S Relations* that some of the aid that India received was motivated by cold war and export promotion considerations It is also true that some of the aid helped enlarge the size of *U S investments in* India India s imports from the United States which were about $230 million in 1948-49 increased five fold by 1972 *There was a massive increase of U S exports to India* while American imports from India accounted for only 0 7 per cent of the total U S imports A large part of American economic assistance to India was given as export finance to promote U S exports to India Some part of the aid about Rs 250 crores went to finance U S investments in India and helped the United States to become the second largest foreign investor in India Most of these investments have been in consumer industries What Erhard Eppler the former Federal German minister for economic co-operation referred to as the technological colonialism[16] of the developed nations which seek to transfer Western consumer habits by encouraging production of luxuries applies to *most of U S investments in India Aid has helped the* United States achieve greater prosperity by fetching higher prices for its goods and services at the cost of developing countries Goods purchased in the United States have invariably been estimated to increase costs by twenty to forty per cent 17

American collaborations with Indian firms have not always produced happy results The monopolistic over

15 Michael Kidron *Foreign Investment in India* Oxford University Press London 19₆5 p 310

16 Erhard Eppler *Not Much Time for the Third World* O wald Wolff Ltd London 1972 p 154

17 Erhard Eppler *Not Much Time for the Third World* Oswald Wolff Ltd London 1970 p 339

bearing attitude of American capital with its preference for the transfer of American consumer habits to India the restrictive and suspicious nature of the response of official New Delhi towards all foreign collaborations and the junior position of the Indian entrepreneur have made many collaboration projects useless as far as the development of a sound Indian economy is concerned While there has always been a section inside the government which welcomed close association with American technology even for consumer goods on the whole New Delhi has resented the use of PL-480 funds to finance the collaborations In many cases the loan to the Indian entrepreneur was taken out of PL-480 funds the building for the factory was put up with PL-480 funds and the labour and staff paid out of the same source In some cases the written-down value of the equipment and machinery supplied by the U S collaborator to the Indian entrepreneur was known to be nominal—too low to be considered an economic factor But India paid for them the original cost The royalty to the U S collaborator irrespective of the out turn of the factory went out of India

A few examples of the operation of U S companies would prove the magnitude of the exploitation of the Indian consumer Synthetics and Chemicals Ltd is believed to have paid to its U S collaborators Firestone Tyre and Rubber Co Ltd Rs 1 9 crores for technical assistance know how and other services while Firestone s investment in the Indian economy is only less than Rs 1.5 crores Colgate Palmolive Ltd a wholly-owned Indian subsidiary of the U S firm of the same name which controls about seventy per cent of the total Indian dentifrice trade of about Rs 12 crores has a paid up capital of Rs 15 lakhs But it remitted to the United States in foreign exchange as net dividend Rs 54 36 lakhs in 1968 (4 800 per cent of its paid up capital) Rs 55 80 lakhs in 1969 and Rs. 80 lakhs in 1970[18] Michael Kidron states that Black-Clawson an American firm is reported to have set up a Rs 2.5 crore

18 *Blitz* August 26 1972.

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and the growth of free non communist societies Washington was not content merely with the growth of non communist societies but wanted them to act according to its wishes Aid was used as a lever to twist the arms of nations unwilling to go along with U S foreign policy objectives Washington has frowned on those nations which have dared to encourage public sector undertakings The United States refused aid to the Bokaro steel plant in India because it was a public-sector undertaking The refusal came even after some Harvard economists had evolved a new justification for foreign aid by taking it out of the framework of the cold war and making it applicable even to the public sector in the developing countries

Most of the U S aid has been given under bilateral agreements and not through international agencies Even when aid is channelled through international agencies the United States has been able to exercise some amount of control and use it as political weapon often forcing aid receiving countries to pursue policies favourable to it This is what it did in Cuba in Brazil under Goulart in Argentina under Illia and even in India in 1966 under Indira Gandhi At one time the United States had the biggest voice in the affairs of the World Bank [22] controlling as it did about twenty five per cent voting power—the largest any country had The World Bank advocated private enterprise and discouraged the public sector In 1955 Eugene R Black the chairman of the World Bank said "Governments should undertake (industrial) ventures if at all only as a last alternative I think every effort should be made to put the venture into the hands of private capital [23] As the *Washington Post* noted editorially on September 25 1973 the multilateral development banks like the World Bank are not without their special weak-

22 Set up at Brettonwoods to complement the activities of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) by providing a steady flow of international investments for the development of productive resources.

23 Address at the annual meeting of IBRD 1955

plant without having added one dollar to India s reserves and suffered no abridgement in the right to receive earnings and repatriate capital in dollars at will[19]

The United States which reputedly favours free trade and business competition has become the seat of the world s largest corporations including those multi national monsters which dominate the economic scene[20] Although U S Congress has legislated against monopolies there has been a concentration of multi national monopolistic business in the United States John Kenneth Galbraith in his book *Economics and the Public Purpose* describes how a few hundred busine s corporations internationalise the tendency to inequality These multi national corporations have the power to distort markets and monetary systems and intervene in favour of their interests During the monetary crisis in 1973 these corporations profited from the instability of the economic system in many countries They have exercised tight controls over countries of the third world The overriding goal of U S policy has been to con truct a system of socities that are open to free economic intervention by private enterprise which in many ways is publicly subsidised[21]

Apart from the control of the economies of the third world another objective of U S aid is to cultivate the friend hip of the developing countries so that their support to the United States in international disputes and at international forums is assured The programme guidance manual of U S AID states Aid as an instrument of foreign policy is best adapted to promoting economic development Development is not an end to itself but it is a critical element in U S policy for in most countries some progress in economic welfare is essential to the maintenance

19 Michael Kidron *Foreign Investments n India* Oxford University Press London 1965 pp 309 10

20 C L Sulzberger *The International Herald Tribune* September 12 1972.

21 Noam Chomsky *At War With Asia* Fontana 1970 p 16

Even when the World Bank has tried to free itself of undue influence from official Washington some of its officers have taken attitudes which do not favour the developing countries In November 1972 William Spall and David Thomas two World Bank officials visited India and held discussions with officials in the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the ministry of agriculture From the report made *on December 14 1972 by the secretary of the agri* cultural refinance corporation to the deputy governor of the RBI it was observed the soundness of the agricultural projects of some of the States was questioned by Spall and Thomas The World Bank officials told the Government of India that *the structure of these two projects* (in Gujarat and Tamil Nadu) *will be radically altered if wholesale trade* in wheat and rice is nationalised from the point of market fees earned volume of produce handled and layout of market yards New Delhi had to give an assurance to the World Bank that nationalisation will not affect any of the above three features of the projects

While Washington used economic assistance to control the economies of the nations of third world and bend them to its will it gave military assistance to those nations who could be used to combat communism and were willing to accept the United States as the leader of the anti communist world Military aid was made into a political currency *a talisman of U S friendship* [26] *The United States* had the notion that greatness and influence could be purchased by military power In its indiscriminate quest for allies in the battle against communism Washington befriended dictatorial regimes believing that its support could transform them to popular governments It had the illusion that it could nominate rulers for smaller States and that it was universally responsible and universally competent and more dangerously *we came greatly to love (and magnify)*

26 Edmund Stillman & William Pfaff *Cold War and Containment in American Foreign Policy in International Perspective* edited by Hancock & Rustow Prentice Hall Inc New Jersey 1971 p 38

nesses not the least of which is their vulnerability to American political pressure

The first consortium set up by the bank to finance the projects of a particular country was the one that was formed in 1958 to help India with foreign exchange problems B K Nehru had an important role in getting the consortium agree to give India a large aid but the large aid meant also some amount of pressure It is believed that the World Bank and the U S AID had exerted pressure on India in 1966 to devalu the rupee without giving her the option to choose the moment of devaluation In AID Discussion Paper No 14 Washington 1967 C P Kindleberger makes clear the importance of the circumstances surrounding devaluation including the commitments by the government concerned and argues that these were unfavourable to India [4] The World Bank has claimed devaluation in India as its one clear success in exercising leverage [5]

The Bank has however shown a little more independence in the 1970s occasionally over ruling U S objections about loans to India and other developing countries In April 1972 disregarding strong U S objection it gave India a *loan of $83 million to help the Shipping Corporation of* India to purchase six oil tankers from Japan and Yugoslavia This was the first time in the Bank s history that the objection raised by the United States the Bank s largest contributor was outvoted by the Bank s international board of directors The objection came from the U S Treasury Department run by John Connaley who feared that helping India to acquire her own tanker fleet would create competition for U S oil companies and their tanker fleet After the voting the United States gave in and made available funds to the bank to replenish its soft loan resources

24 Quoted by Teresa Hayter in *Aid as Imperialism* Penguin Books Ltd 1971 p 115 This portion of Miss Hayter s MSS was deleted by World Bank officials when her MSS was submitted for clearance

25 *ibid* p 41

aid was humanitarian As far as military aid was concerned the strategists continued their old practice of supporting friendly regimes and shifted their guns to the trouble spots in south-east west and south Asia Examining U S policies towards developing countries George Liska says that despite the New Frontiers peculiar fashion of talking (even more than thinking) of the third world policies there has been little substantiative difference between the Eisenhower Kennedy and Johnson administrations [29]

In the name of aid the United States poured millions of dollars into west Asia It conducted a clandestine war in Laos and Cambodia suppressing news of its involvement from the U S public In the name of military aid its war machine in Vi tnam experimented with new weapons of destruction A large percentag of the annual expenditure of about $30 000 million spent on the Vietnam war went to U S laboratories and pioneer industries which apart from manufacturing many sophisticated weapons experimented with projects some of which looked absurd In 1969 under an independent programme the Pentagon committed $600 000 to examine the use of birds in warfare The con tract committing the funds said that the programme was based *on the supposition that birds will eventually replace* humans for activities that are dangerous difficult expensive and boring [30] like aerial photography gunnery steering of missiles detection of mines and storage and-destroy opera tions

The vast U S m'litary industrial complex has dictated foreign policies controll d a large part of the foreign aid and made Washington keep millions of soldiers in many countries of the world supplying huge quantities of arms to other countries About forty nine per cent of the aid the United States has given by way of loans and grants is for mili ary assistan e While hard headed businessmen plan for the prod iction of bigger quantities of armaments

1 ...mats—like Bowles Keating and Moyni

he World p 347

...ber 19 1969

these vast responsibilities we once abhorred [27] The United States went to the far corners of the world with gold and guns and supported men and nations it thought would add to its strength It was so allergic to communism that it was willing to help all those who wanted to fight communism and some un crupulous regimes manufactured communist plots against them elves and managed to get aid from Washington

George F Kennan as the chief of the State Depart ment s policy planning staff in an anonymous article entit led The Sources of Soviet Conduct by Mr X in the July 1947 issue of *Forei n Affairs* su gested that by the vigilant application of counter force at a series of cons tantly shifting geographical and political points the Uni ted States should prevent the Soviet Union from expanding its influence The U S concept of the containment of communism by military alliances was supposed to owe its origin to Kennan s thesis a though Kennan himself did not envisage military alliances and deployment of U S forces in foreign countries as part of his thesis He expressed regret in his *Memoirs* 1975 50 for not making it clear that when he called for the containment of the Soviet power he meant not the containment by military means of a military threat but the political containment of a political threat [8] Even when Soviet military threat did not materi alise and Moscow leap frogged the military ring built around the Soviet Union at tremendous cost the U S policy of containment of communism continued with no change till 1970

When the cold war thawed and the old justification for giving aid disappeared the United States tried to find a new rationa e for continuing aid which had by itself be come an economic programme of some value to the Unit ed States and had developed vested interests Washington declared that the main consideration for giving economic

27 *ibid* p 131
28 George F Kennan *Memoirs* 1925 50 Little Brown & Co Boston 1967 p 358

think we have spent enough and got very little in return I am willing to drop India U S displeasure with India was shown when the World Bank s assessment of India s requirement of $1 250 million for 1972 was not accepted by the United States although all members of the consortium had approved it After the gross indifference shown by Washington New Delhi did not want U S AID to operate in India and tightened its stand on the use of PL-480 funds New Delhi decided to discontinue the facilities given to U S AID to operate its training programmes for third countries with PL-480 funds in India However after India and the United States moved closer to each other in 1973 India s attitude changed and a satisfactory solution for the disposal of the accumulated PL-480 funds was found in February 1974

As far as India was concerned U S aid as a normal way of supporting economic development came to an end in 1971 although the Planning Commission envisaged that under normal conditions India would require some kind or other of foreign aid till 1980 Massive economic aid is a thing of the past and its effectiveness as a political weapon has been blunted In the 1970s aid is unlikely to be used by big nations as a lever to influence the small ones India s relations with the United States were unrealistic as long as New Delhi depended on U S aid which made both the aid-giver and the recipient suffer from complexes vitiating their ties Summing up India s attitude towards aid Indira Gandhi said We want to do without aid It is not U S aid alone we want to do without but all aid The giver receiver relationship is never a happy one We still need help but without strings

A new philosophy of aid was born when the United States reached an understanding with China and the Soviet Union in 1972 The talk of containing communism and saving democracy became as innocuous as the Internationale The United States has no illusions whatsoever about the marvels that aid can produce and has now the realistic approach that development assistance can play a part in boosting U S trade money and investments in the countries of the third world It has subjected scrutiny the

han in India—speak of peace Amba sador Kenneth Keating said in New Delhi in March 197? that of the two basic considerations that motivated the United States one was a purely humanitarian reason a moral obligation to assist developing nations and the other was the belief that the world will be a more peaceful place if each and every nation can provide social justice and economic progress for its people In 1971 when Pakistan diverted what were called humanitarian relief funds for construction of military defences against India on the east Bengal border and the U S general accounting office reported the extensive diversion of humanitarian funds to defence purposes Washington did not ask Pakistan to stop the misu e of aid

India s relations with the United States became sour when Washington decided to withhold the $87 6 million economic aid that was in the pipeline in December 1971 on the ground that India attacked Pakistan Washington did not stop the aid in the pipeline to Pakistan The U S action ignored India s stand and held her responsible for the war in the sub continent The U S State Department s bureau of public affairs claimed that the aid was suspended because India did not comply with the resolution on Bangladesh passed by the U N general assembly William Rogers the U S secretary of state said in January 1972 that if Washington were to provide very substantial amounts of foreign aid and the aid receiving nations got involved in warfare aid would go down the drain He asked Is that a wise investment of money ? And that is what we did In India s case we have stopped foreign aid for the moment and we are going to take a hard look before we renew aid With evident sarcasm Rogers said that he was pleased that Indira Gandhi had said they are going to do more in terms of self sufficiency He said the United States had to stand on certain principles and the idea that it must always side with the winner was fallacious

The United States weary of aid programmes had been looking for an excuse to cut off aid to India Senator Everett Jackson a senior Democrat said in January 1972 I

Americans now suspect the very concept of foreign aid Some liberal leaders like Senator Fulbright had believed that the disorder in our financial house was largely due to the accumulated effects of many years of over commitment abroad including the foreign aid programme He thought it was the zealous determination to control and shape the destiny of much of the world that had brought the United States to a state of financial exhaustion The U S Congress was critical of the colossal waste in foreign aid as in the case of the $ 3 2 million hotel and apartment complex U S AID built for its officials in New Delhi and later transferred to India for lack of tenants Fulbright had said the hotel and apartments were an appropriate symbol of the foreign aid programme India was happy to receive the well furnished complex of buildings at no cost but as New Delhi discovered to its own embarrassment the up keep of the hotel and the apartment complex was so expensive and so out of proportion in the normal conditions in India that it had some qualm of conscience in receiving it This embarrassment and this qualm of conscience were appropriate symbols of the U S foreign aid programme The economic assistance that India may accept from the United States in the future will only be under a more healthy arrangement with none of the embarrassment of the political tag on it

methods of aid and the agencies through which it is given In 1973 U S AID was renamed the Mutual Development and Co-operation Agencies (MDCA) The United States gave greater emphasis to aid through the multilateral development banks Aid through these agencies has become essential to the world standing of the United States [31]

But in 1973 the United States avoided the payment of its reduced share (scaled down from 40 per cent to 33 1/3 per cent) of the World Bank s soft loan outlet the International Development Association The U S Congress approved in 1972 only half the funds pledged to the Inter American Development Bank and it left the Asian Development Bank some $100 million in the lurch [3] Although Washington had pledged $15 million to the African Development Bank not a cent was paid in 1973 George Shultz the U S secretary for treasury declared at the Nairobi meeting of finance ministers in September 1973 that Washington wanted to revamp its aid to developing nations and that the countries which nationalised private foreign assets should not expect official bilateral or multilateral aid

In the Indian budget for 1975 76 out of the total estimated foreign aid receipt of Rs 9 8 47 crores a provision of Rs 10 62 crores as U S assistance to India was made Even this token assistance from the United States did not materialise India has not received any aid from the United States since 1971 when the Nixon administration cut off all aid to India in the wake of the Indo Pakistan conflict Despite the fact that no aid was received from the United States Indian economy has not suffered any undue strain. At one time it was thought that the United States might resume aid to India during the U S fiscal year ending June 1976 However recent policy pronouncements by U S leaders have made it clear that the United States will not give economic assistance to any country which does not support U S policy

31 *The Washington Post* September 25 1973
32 *ibid*

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9

THE FUTURE

PRIME MINISTER Nehru s speeches on foreign affairs till about the end of 1954 show that whenever he re ferred to foreign powers he mentioned the United States first and only then the Soviet Union While moving the objectives resolution in the Indian constituent assembly he referred at length to the making of the great American nation then to the French constitution to the British con stitution and last to the Soviet constitution Despite India s genuine anti imperialism in the United Nations India had voted many times more with the United States than with the Soviet Union in the first few years of her independence The bourgeoisie leaders of the Indian independence movement had a certain respect for the American war of independence Abraham Lincoln and Thomas Jefferson were indeed hallow ed names for them The Indian leaders believed that Presi dent Roosevelt had played a useful role in pursuading the British to quit the Indian sub-continent

New Delhi had indeed high regard for Washington and hoped to establish a close relationship with it When India became independent the United States was riding on the crest of success It was at the zenith of its power and pres tige Its military might was unparalleled With the best navy the strongest long range air force and the monopoly of nuclear weapons it was the most powerful nation in the world Its commitment to bring freedom and democracy to the colonial world was unshakable—so it seemed It was an ally of the Soviet Union and a close friend of China ruled

by Chiang Kai-shek Unlike Europe which was badly shaken by the war the United States had remained not only unhurt but had prospered The war was a blessing and had lifted its depressed economy During the war the United States was the proud champion of freedom and crusader against fascism After the war it became the financier of the world and the arsenal of Western democracies In the early 1950s Washington fostered the idea of the dawn of a new era on the shattered world—the dawn of the American century India and many other new nations looked with respect and awe with hopeful eyes to the United States which gave billions of dollars in economic aid to the war ravaged nations of Europe and even to the Soviet Union But it also footed another bill one that was much more massive and impressive and more terrifying Through a perverse understanding of the measures necessary for its security and the security of the rest of the non communist world it pumped its fabulous wealth into illiberal and retrograde regimes in a string of satellite States

The image of this great nation is today sullied As the veneer of its humanitarian programmes and progressive ideals disappears what is exposed is the steely interior of a nation obsessed with power and wealth The conditions that had made the United States the saviour of the world and the supreme aid giver do not exist now Europe which was nursed back into normal life by the United States after the second world war is self reliant and stable Most of Asia Africa and Latin America are free from colonial rule their nationalism challenging foreign attempts to dominate them The concept of a bi polar world and the iron curtain so sedulously fostered by Washington in the 1950s and 1960s has been replaced by that of a multipolar power structure and co existence The United States has had to give up its two decade old efforts to contain the Soviet Union and China behind a military shield and come to terms with them The pattern of multi polarity that Washington itself has encouraged to emerge has deprived it of some of its earlier ability to manipulate world politics all by itself It now requires the concurrence of Moscow

before it can act effectively as was demonstrated in the crisis in west Asia in October 1973 In the last two decades the United States has suffered many defeats both in war and diplomacy The first and the most humiliating of them was the military rout in Korea The long war it fought in Indo China and the peace with honour it was forced to negotiate with a tiny nation show how American power—not the number of nuclear weapons but political power—has ebbed in the last two decades In south Asia the United States found itself unabl to act effectively in the war between India and Pakistan in 1971 except within the larger pattern of the detente with the Soviet Union

This is a poor picture of the United States But there is another side to it which it would be foolish not to recognise The Americans were at one time isolationists and had not wanted to run the world After the isolationist backlash disappeared during Roosevelt s time and the United States became an interventionist it was able to get away with many things that other nations would have found it hard to—like the use of the atom bomb on Hiroshima and the killing of million of Vietnamese If the Soviet Union had been guilty of these bombings and massacres it would have been isolated from the rest of the world and condemned in perpetuity The fact that every nation has been wooing the United States and that it has been able to flirt with every power in the world—with the Soviet Union and China with India and Pakistan with Egypt and Israel—shows if anything the continued relevance of the dollar

However as President Nixon admitted there was a lack of direction and honesty in American policies The United States was drawn into situations it could not influence and had no positive concept of where we wanted to go [1] When most of mankind s efforts in the last two decades were directed towards securing and preserving freedom and human dignity the wealth and weight of this nation born out of a revolution and nurtured by the spirit

1 *Report to Congress* President Nixon February 1972

of Lincoln and Jefferson were demonstrated on the moon and in the Mekong delta in Indo China more than in the ghettos and slums of the world As a result of these and other factors the world has indeed lost its faith in the United States as a democratic nation committed to defend freedom. India s hope of purposeful co-operation with the United S ates on the basis of mutual respect for each other has worn thin After two decades of shared faith and shared causes the two countries today stand apart hoping to have a better understanding but viewing each other with suspicion The fervent wish expressed in the winter of 1959 in New Delhi by Nehru and Eisenhower that the two countries ought to be closer has remained unfulfilled

The United States and India are however friends and not enemies At the level of individuals particularly the two countries have responded to each other warmly Many American academicians have consistently supported India and Indians are grateful for the assistance from the United States in many areas of our development [2] American scholars have made serious enquiries into India s social and economic structure and the significance of her art and culture traditions and modes of life although prejudiced American scholarship has often tended to produce destructive results In the recent past there has been a sudden spurt of interest in Indian crafts in Indian music in *yoga* In a parallel development new values have impinged on the American consciousness The drug cult the recognition of the transcendental experience the change from racial to cosmic identity writings of troubled thinkers like Alan Watts Timothy Leary and Richard Alpert have not been aberrant phenomena though quantitatively they have appeared to be so It is difficult to assess their impact because of their immediacy But it is evident that they relate to an irreversible American revolution in attitudes A smouldering change is on a change that could perhaps make the Indian ethos less incomprehensible to the American

2. Indira Gandhi *Foreign Affairs* October 1972 New York

On a more practical plane Indians and Americans share many values They believe in the fundamental human rights and governmental concepts inherited to a large degree from the British[3] from whom both won their independence Liberty and the pursuit of happiness by the individual are common ideals and both the governments are formed with the consent of the people Both have political parties elections and independent judicial systems empowered to examine the constitutional validity of executive actions There is a certain superficial democratic denominator common to both the countries The easy human relationships the openness of the society and the freedom of speech and expression are also common features The peoples of both the countries are basically friendly and hospitable and democratic institutions and a free Press are common to both The national newspapers of the United States irrespective of the nature of the interests controlling them have asserted their professional freedom and carried on many memorable crusades against illiberal commitments and interests of their own government In fact nothing comparable exists in India where a self-critical newspaper would run the risk of being branded unpatriotic. Although some observers have said that the national newspapers of the United States are not responsible as they are free[4] there is no doubt they are more powerful and free than those in India The concept of a free Press, however is shared by both the countries

There are Indians who admire many aspects of

3 Phillips Talbot and S L Poplai *India and America* Harper Bros New York 1958 p 2

4 William Rees Mogg the editor of the *Times* London told the National Press Club of the United States at a luncheon address on June 15 1973 that the American Press in its Watergate coverage did not discharge its duty to be responsible as well as free His objection was that the Press coverage prejudiced the right to trial by an impartial jury and that it behaved like a prosecuting counsel and even a hunting pack

American life and a powerful lobby operates in India not only in the academic and business world but also in Parliament and in the administration The U S lobby to day is different from its earlier incarnation of the cold war days It has ceased to be a hard edged ideological lobby and become the representative of a wide range of diffused interests—from appreciation of American dissent to admira tion of American affluence The members of this lobby believe that India has received most generous aid from the United States and she should take full advantage of the technical and scientific advance made by the United States Apart from the right wing political parties and businessmen even some sections of the Congress party have hailed the United States as a great nation Some of them point to Nehru s words that our two republics share common faith in democratic institutions the democratic way of life and are dedicated to the cause of freedom

A close examination would however show that political forms and postures and constitutional structures of the two countries differ India is firmly committed to a socialistic pattern of society to State control of procurement and distribution of essential commodities In the United States private enterprise is basic to the national ethos and there is nothing like a competing public sector in industry The stranglehold on the State apparatus by the military indus trial complex in the United States is so great that democra tic processes tend to get distorted

Politics in India is not without its own good measure of scandals but certainly nothing so systematic and tech nologically formidable as Watergate has so far happened in New Delhi The practice of auctioning ambassadorial posts to those who pay heavy donations to the election fund is unknown in India [5] though in New Delhi also political

5 Nixon raised at least $1 3 million from his 1972 ambassadors and new diplomatic appointees and the committee to re elect the President was in business a year after his election still accepting bids—or cam-paign contributions as they are sometimes called

favours are distributed clandestinely The espionage directed against rival political parties and their leaders and the stage managed public reaction like the one in which Nixon s own re-election committee spent more than $4 000 in 1972 to send him telegrams—ostensibly from ordinary citizens—praising his decision to mine Haihpong harbour in north Vietnam would be considered odd even in New Delhi which has its own share of minor mechanics of self propulsion

The political beliefs of the United States and India are different India believes in peace co-existence and *panch sheel* The United States believes in stability military strength and leadership *Unlike the United States* India has a measure of tolerance of communism not because she necessarily believes in communism but because the world communist powers have been allies in her anti colonialism and have consistently supported her stand on many issues including Kashmir

India s pronounced leftist tilt anti colonialism *and anti imperialism have some shades of anti* Americanism and the United States suspects India of want ing to undermine its position in Asia Apart from the differences in the political faith of the two countries there are differences in their constitutional systems The parlia- mentary system in India has few points of similarity with the presidential system in the United States

There are mutual prejudices There are psychological barriers as well In the early days of independence the politi- cal leaders and the British educated Indian civil servants were rather contemptuous of the United States They *thought that compared to the British* Americans were immature undependable and suffering from the illusion of omnipotence Some of them believed that India was closer to Britain than to the United States and that Indian tradi- tions had little in common with those of the United States In India there was at that time a new American presence— economic political and psychological—which was gradually *supplanting the benign after glow of the East India Company*

The Anglophil Indian elite resented this new presence and regarded the American as an interloper in the evolving tradition of India The elite considered the Americans to be actors rather than doers and seemed to believe what Kissinger said of Americans in an indiscreet interview in 1970 Americans admire the cow boy entering a village or city alone on his horse without even a pistol maybe because he does not go in for shooting He acts that s all

Even the Anglophobe who swore by Indian traditions and heritage was against the United States He sneered at the American by declaring that he was a materialist and that work and its rewards—leisure and comfort—were the only basis of the American experience while he believed that to the Indian with a different set of priorities and principles peace was an experience unrelated to external conditions and that he found it if not within himself in personal ties family relationships and only last in work. This mood persists even after a new generation of Indians with Harvard and MIT background has come to decision making levels in the government and elsewhere Many thousands of Indians have studied in American universities and hundreds of Indians occupying positions of importance have visited the United States at the invitation of U S government agencies or private organisations But these Indians have not been very vocal in their support of the United States

Discomfited though the Indian is by the underlying utilitarianism of the American system he nevertheless recognises its dynamism a recognition tinged with jealousy But there is also genuine discomfiture when he discovers that the secret of this dynamism is not in the superior intelligence or moral excellence of the American but in the art of organisation—the mobilisation of intelligence and talent to develop produce and market As J J Servan Schreiber writes it is the managerial efficiency of the United States that other nations lack [6] The Indian knows

6 J J Servan Schreiber *The American Challenge* Atheneum New York 1968

that Americans are the best managers possess individual initiative and innovative knack and their business structures are flexible and there is decentralisation of business decisions But these are not qualities which he particularly admires The American society which prides itself on its business character produces as Kissinger says half baked administrators Their experience is inadequate to produce the combination of political acumen conceptual skill persuasive power and substantive knowledge required for the highest positions of government [7] These are qualities the Indian admires

The American on his part refuses to treat with any seriousness the claim of the Indian to be spiritual which as far as the affluent American is concerned is a rationalisation of inefficient poverty He is amused by India s efforts to project herself as a nation with high moral commitments He is not impressed by these commitments and he considers the Indian inept devious and falsely moralistic A Princeton professor told this writer that the reaction of another American to whom she had given the *Bhagavad Gita* to read was that it was a book which taught how to be dead without dying The American finds India reluctant to change resistant to new ideas devoid of scientific and technological skill lacking in initiative—a vast mass of people held together by religion and dead traditions Even when facts contradict this appreciation of India the average American loves to persist in the quaint image of a lotus eating people The India that the average American likes to hear is the India of the past In the United States there is an unreasonable blindness towards contemporary India Let it be noted in parenthesis that there is no such blindness towards contemporary China presumably because in the emerging pattern of power reality it is a blindness even the most supercilious American cannot afford As Norman Brown remarks American sympathy for India is not born out of the knowledge that Indians are creators of civilisation de

7 Kissinger *The Necessity for Choice* Harper & Brothers New York 1960 p 341

serving the highest respect capable of giving as well as receiving a people with whom America should plan to co-operate on terms of moral and intellectual equality [8] For a long while the United States saw India in a kind of dependent relationship Daniel Moynihan was referring to this mood when he said that at one time there was an aspect of we know best we know who India s allies should be what their agricultural policies should be what their family planning programme should be [9]

As noted earlier American attitudes particularly in the young are changing The mood of the campuses the protest and dissent expressed in radical study groups and journals and the mushrooming leftist studies in American universities are significant pointers These are bound to change the American attitude towards other peoples and divest it of the childish superiority of affluence The young American has begun to shed the belief that he has a moral responsibility to civilise feed and look after the people of the world and teach them to save themselves For the first time after the days of Franklin Roosevelt the problems of redistribution of wealth and the dehumanising of the lower middle class are being openly discussed It is being admitted grudgingly that the United States is not after all an incredibly rich country and that we are beginning to realise that we are also desperately poor country—poor in most of the things that throughout the history of mankind have been cherished as riches [10] The belief that the real enemies of the middle class in the United States are the blacks and the slum-dwellers and not the very rich is being challenged The young intellectuals are now aware of what the United States has done in Latin America Africa and Asia in the name of aid and how the ultimate end has been the

8 W Norman Brown *The United States and India Pakistan Bangladesh* Harvard University Press Cambridge Mass 1972 pp 394 395
9 *The International Herald Tribune* September 1973
10 Charles A Reich *The Greening of America* Bantam edition 1971 p 1

alienation of the people of these continents

These domestic transformations these changes in the philosophical conceptions and psychological framework of the nation—and for that matter even similar transformations in the Indian society—have however only a slow long term effect on foreign affairs and are largely irrelevant as far as the immediate ties between the two countries are concerned Every society today finds itself in an environment not of its own choice and has to fashion its foreign relations by *adjusting to the pressures on it from within as well as from* outside The choice of policy and action is oftentimes limited by external circumstances and not by inherent values or native attitudes This is more so in the case of developing nations whose response is like that of an amateur chess player who is forced to make moves by the immediate moves of the player opposite A champion would on the other hand foresee his as well as his opponent s moves much ahead and control the course of the game

There is no doubt scope for different interpretation of the external circumstances depending on the quality of leadership and its perception Indeed more than the incompatibility of their social and political values it is their attitude towards third countries that has divided India and the United States They have worked against each other s interests But it is their action in respect of third countries that has created more distrust and misunderstanding India s suspicion of U S policies towards Pakistan China and the Soviet Union on the one hand and the American dislike of India s closeness to the Soviet Union (and ironically earlier closeness to China) on the other hand have contributed the most towards dividing the two countries

The U S support to Pakistan for the past two decades *has been one of the greatest blocks in the relations between* New Delhi and Washington This continues to be an impediment although a slight shift in the U S position was detected by some observers in 1974 Washington s desire to move a little closer to India had been traced to Kissinger s new diplomacy Kissinger said in August 1973 that he wanted India and the United States to move towards a

more mature relationship We now recognise India as of the major powers in the developing world During last six months relations with India have developed very undramatic but a very steady manner Ambass Moynihan of course has played a major role Our e is now to remove many of the irritating legacies o 1971 policy as well as some concrete difficulties which arisen irrespective of the 1971 war like accumulatic PL-480 funds

He said one of the reasons why he opposed Indi 1971 was that he believed that though the United S was working for the same objective as India s (the determination of Bangladesh) the military action take India was uncalled for He declared that the United S would not supply lethal weapons to Pakistan and fresh plies would be limited to spare parts of the military ec ment already sold When he was questioned about large scale supply of U S arms to Iran and wheth could give an assurance that Iran would not use these for aggressive purposes he said it was the policy o United States that if Iran used U S arms for aggre purposes Washington would intervene

This was a vague statement carrying no convictio Indians who recalled the deceptive assurances made decades earlier by Eisenhower and Dulles on the supp arms to Pakistan Despite Kissinger s passionate phr logy there was ambivalence about the U S attitude to India New Delhi had learnt many bitter lessons a U S prevarication on arms shipments and was natu suspicious of U S warmth towards Pakistan The I dent told Bhutto in 1973 that the independence and int of Pakistan was the cornerstone of U S foreign po Bhutto later told the U S President that his interest not in obsolete spare parts but in red hot weap from the United States Kissinger himself gave expre to the close U S involvement in Pakistan when he dec in Islamabad in November 1973 that Pakistan and United States shared common principles and the fr ship between the peoples and the governments c

two countries continued to grow And in February 1975 the ten year old embargo against selling lethal weapons to Pakistan was lifted India fears that continued U S support to Pakistan might bolster the Pakistani military machine and encourage it to embark on another war even if the United States does not want a war in south Asia

Another factor that has divided India and the United States is China. The U S attitude towards China has all along been opposed to the attitude of India Just as India disliked the U S opposition to China in the 1950s she now suspects the U S detente with China As far as the United States is concerned the detente represents a breakthrough in its stalemated diplomacy without which frustration and widespread discontentment would have risen among the American people It is true China made the first moves to create a new opening But Washington has been able to seize the opportunity and establish relations with Peking without losing the confidence of Moscow This is a major achievement But as far as India is concerned the detente is of doubtful valu Indira Gandhi summed up India s reaction towards U S moves on China when she said Some years ago the United States dealt with Asia ignoring China Now it is dealing with China ignoring Asia India is worried that a strong Sino American equation might make China not too keen on establishing better relations with India and might make it difficult for India to remain non aligned It would encourage India s neighbours to move closer to China making India s political posture less convincing India and China are neighbours and New Delhi would not like India to be placed in such a position that she would have to seek Washington s blessings to normalise relations with Peking

The U S detente with the Soviet Union is also a factor that influences India s relations with the United States The detente is viewed with reservations in New Delhi India has declared that she is against any division of the world into spheres of influence by the two superpowers After Soviet party chief Brezhnev s visit to New Delhi in November 1973 India welcomed the detente as a step to

wards relaxation of tensions in the world but expressed the hope that this relaxation will spread to other areas of the world [11] Even in December 1973 India expressed her reservation about the detente which Indira Gandhi felt was limited to Europe and which she hoped would extend to the entire family of nations [12] The detente and checkmating and the formidable closing in of superpower policing nevertheless leaves in a strangely unanticipated way manoeuvring room for intermediate powers to carry out intermediate strategies This is the opportunity not a great opportunity but a small and tangible one that India s policy makers should seize India has indeed officially wel comed the end of the bi polar world but she faces problems of adjustment to the new environment of political multi polarity and bilateralism Furthermore the world is still bi polar militarily as has been demonstrated during the Arab Israeli war in 1973 and India s fears of American military involvement in the subcontinent and the Indian Ocean remain

The ideological pre-occupations of the cold war and Washington s crusade to make the American way of life a universal model are things of the past But the trans ideological attitude the United States has adopted as an expedient has not made the global kaleidoscope less confusing nor has it made matters easier for developing countries like India to work out their own solutions India does not ques tion the wisdom of the detente but she has her doubts about its usefulness to India We are not sure said Indira Gandhi if these flexible relationships necessarily point to a more stable world order Co existence by itself does not preclude policies separately or in concert which are detrimental to the freedom and interests of third coun tries [13] Though big power ambitions have become subdued and long term and have national rather than ideological

11 The joint declaration signed by India and the Soviet Union on November 28 1973

12 *Patriot* December 4 1973

13 *Foreign Affairs* October 1973 New York

motivations they have not ceased to menace countries of the third world The superpowers still seek friends if not clients in the third world The ambiguity of the U S attitude towards India has yet to be resolved and there is no certainty that Washington will be less belligerent in the future and will not encourage dictatorial regimes against India The fall in the prestige of the dollar the uncertain ties of the peace in Indo China and U S estrangement with Japan the aloofness of Europe and above all internal disorders can create a belligerent mood in the United States

All this can have its repercussions on U S ties with India But the paradox of the relationship not in terms of real politik however is India s dependence on the United States even when she is in total disharmony with U S policy on Pakistan China and the Soviet Union She is forced to normalise her relationship with the United States and maintain friendly ties How close she can move towards Washington is again determined by external cir cumstances—by the extent of Moscow s commitment to India to support her defence needs and heavy industries Although New Delhi is not tied to Moscow at the moment Soviet Union is an important factor in India s defence and economic growth So is the United States as far as econo- mic growth is concerned India needs import of non ferrous metals fertilisers heavy chemicals oils and even food grains from the United States The Soviet Union can meet only fifteen per cent of the total Indian import bill of about Rs 800 crores for these items Until India is able to find alternate sources her depend nce on the United States as a trading partner cannot be ignored New Delhi s attempts in the recent past to strengthen economic ties with Washington show that India recognises that trade relations have to go on

The U S response to India s overtures has been on the whole ambiguous Apart from an occasional spurt of enthusiasm Washington has been indifferent towards India Many influential U S leaders do not favour close identifi cation of the United States with India and feel that

Washington has carried far too long a heavy burden in budgetary expenditure to save the unproductive Indians who should be more self reliant These leaders see in India a fumbling nationalism which is unable to bring out the country s latent strength at the mercy of the Soviet Union and resentful of Western influence and power It is also true that some U S leaders who are wary of the United States associating with countries which are close to the Soviet Union find India in the Soviet orbit Still others point out that India has not done anything half as spectacular as China who they feel is being reshaped with energy and discipline

India has not evoked admiration and Washington has never considered her to be of any major political significance for the future of Asia[14] There was a time some twenty years ago when India was somewhat important in the power equation when India and China were equated by some leaders in Washington as the two powers which were aspiring for the leadership of Asia Washington professed an interest in India assuming this leadership but all the time it gave undue importance to China With the weight of her nuclear weapons her compact internal structure and aggressive foreign policy China has emerged as a regional power a mini superpower If at all there had been a race for leadership the race had never really begun for India The United States as indeed all nations respect power and India with its load of democratic principles and loose political and economic philosophy has not been able to generate and exercise sufficient power at any particular time over any particular issue to evoke U S respect In the United States she continues to be classified as a poor nation with a big ego Her relationship with the United States cannot be that of an equal and there had not been anything subtle or concealed about this inequality

Whatever the vicissitudes of this relationship the United States recognises India as a potentially powerful

14 Chester Bowles *Foreign Affairs* January 1972.

nation and has no wish to write her off Unlike Indonesia or Egypt India cannot be debunked Some U S leaders would like to rationalise U S ties with India on the basis of trade Some are happy that India s present policy is moving towards rhetoric for the left and benefits for the right The left wing forces in New Delhi have their legitimate fears of the consequences of allowing U S business corporations to operate freely The political records of these corporations in many countries are sordid and they can gain if allowed freedom a stranglehold on the Indian economy and engineer economic chaos if it suits them [15] Some of the consumer goods industries particularly pharmaceutical and cosmetic are subsidiaries of multi national U S corporations and the policy planners in New Delhi fear that the expansion and proliferation of these corporations in India would further corrupt social life stifle economic progress and encourage and sustain an elitist society India would like to strengthen trade relations with the United States but she wants to avoid the danger of U S economic penetration

All these are negative factors But there is hope in New Delhi that a mature relationship with the United States would be possible and that Washington might be responsive to India s needs and aspirations The bright possibility of normalising relations between India and the United States is mirrored in the utterances of Indian and American leaders who for separate reason welcome normal relations with each other Explaining India s policy Indira Gandhi said in Teheran on April 30 1974 that her Government was guided only by the needs of the people Our every programme must be judged from the viewpoint of our

15 The Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) in the United States serves the interest of these multi national corporations and insures them against expropriation Even in the United States there is severe criticism of these corporations and a senate sub committee has declared that the OPIC does not serve the national interests of the United States and its citizens

people s needs She also made it clear, as the report in *Patriot* of May 1 1974 showed that friendship with one group of countries should not mean hostility to another '

Kissinger argued that the United States should not put all its faith in China and should have close ties with both Egypt and India The pace of normalisation of relations between China and the United States had been slow and there was disappointment about it both in Washington and Peking The United States had also not been too happy with its relations with west Europe There were strains in the detente between the United States and the Soviet Union The only area where U S diplomacy had suceeded was west Asia In the uncertain international climate Washington felt that it would not be a bad idea to keep India happy Although the priorities remained the same Washington made slight adjustments to please India It had even played a role in the rapprochement between Iran and India For quite some time there was a tendency both in Washington and New Delhi to be agreeable to each other

Despite all the strains and stresses through which the relationship had gone through there was hope that the two countries would be able to work together for mutual advantage in specific areas After Y B Chavan met President Ford in October 1974 he said that there was mutual desire for good relations 'They need us and we need them This is not a one way business It will have to be worked out He added that there were some areas where there could be co operation between the two countries and wanted to improve ties in these areas without bringing in in any euphoria Kissinger had declared earlier that a strong and stable India was a major factor in U S foreign policy Our policies run parallel and the strength and stability of India is a key factor in the security of region If words could demolish distrust and build bridges of understanding India and United States should have become close friends

There are however certain basic issues which transcend these abstractions these hopes. Indira Gandhi referred to

one of them when she said in a perceptive interview that India U S relations depended on American considerations of global strategy and their efforts to build up leaders in various regions that are acceptable to them She was not acceptable to them As President Ford said on Feb 8 1976 the U S Government simply recognised the Government of India. We neither support nor defend its ideology it is purely a matter of a pragmatic diplomatic recognition It does not mean we support the things that have happened internally (in India) at all

If the United States shows no interest in recognising India s importance in south Asia and finds India unacceptable if it shows no interest in withdrawing from Asia if it continues to dump arms on India s neighbours if it wants to strengthen its presence in the Indian Ocean if it seeks to weaken India by establishing firm alliances with those whom she considers inimical Indian public opinion would not allow New Delhi to be friendly towards Washington If a durable understanding is to be reached the United States as a superior power has to have some understanding of India s size her strength her economic potential and her political faith A similar practicality must inform India s response to the United States also India should recognise that the choice before her is not between accepting or rejecting the United States with all its weaknesses and triumphs but in evolving a workable relationship India cannot plan her relationship with the United States on the basis of its internal political economic and social situations She should be prepared to seek alliances with tyrants and treaties with enemies if national security demands such a course This does not preclude the necessity for a spirit of , in Washington as New
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the spirit of understanding is bound to be elusive

However the detente re stesses a few age old lessons about understanding among peoples Between nations there are no absolute friendships no indissoluble enmities There are only evolving adjustments The contemporary dilemma is that there are no relationships based purely on ideologies and there is a convergence of national interests on all international issues The Soviet Union and China have learnt this lesson The United States has also learnt this lesson So has India And this may help them to evolve a far reaching and meaningful relationship a complex balancing of a multitude of conflicts As national self interest and national security replace the old romance of ideology both India and the United States would have to shed the mythologies of their earlier diplomacy and seek a new relationship

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16 *The International Herald Tribune* September 27 1973

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